

VOL. I NO. 4

JUNE
1909

PRICE 25 CTS

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HEARTS AFLAME

By Louise Winter

I

"RECEIVE her? Not I."
"Fancy *you* being so particular!"

"One must draw the line somewhere," the first speaker drawled, in a rich, indolent voice. She was a slender, dark-eyed woman, gowned magnificently in purple velvet.

Her companion, sitting opposite, replaced her teacup on its saucer before remarking, with apparent irrelevance: "Those Tyroleans are wretched!"

It was the first year that the Palm Garden of the Waldorf was opened as a tea-room, and society, welcoming the novelty, was in the habit of dropping in for a cup of tea about five o'clock.

The other woman shrugged her shoulders. "They do their part; fill up gaps in the conversation and give us something to cavil at," she said. Helena Lloyd did not permit such a thing as a discordant note to ruffle her composure.

"And you will really strike Frances's name from your list?" her companion resumed. She was in marked contrast to her friend, dressed simply in a tweed tailor-made, with a rather severe walking-hat tilted over her eyes. They were both leaders in the social world, and they were discussing a vital question just then at issue.

"Why not? Do you think, because my first husband was such a brute I had to leave him, and because circumstances forced me into a second marriage, that I am bound to hold out a helping hand to all remarried divorcees who wish to climb back into

the fold? Really, my dear Mrs. Leigh, that is absurd!"

A pause followed this tirade; then Mrs. Leigh, who was older and more lenient, began: "If it had not been for the publicity——"

"If! My dear, it was horribly public."

"I know."

"And the whole affair in such poor taste!"

Mrs. Leigh sighed. "After all, if the private lives of a good many of us were laid bare . . ."

Mrs. Lloyd frowned. "You are so uncompromising," she murmured. "What is known is sinful, not what is hidden."

Mrs. Leigh helped herself to another macaroon before she inquired: "And Alec Dunbar—is he also to be ignored?"

"It is no crime to be near-sighted."

"But they are married now," Mrs. Leigh offered, by way of protest.

"Yes, after her husband got his divorce and his wife got hers, and they spent six months abroad."

Mrs. Leigh laughed. "What more do you exact? Really, it is you who are uncompromising."

Her friend looked at her curiously. "Are you going to stand by them?" she asked.

"I?—what an idea! Still, I confess I am sorry for them, and if active partisanship were not such a bore, I might."

"You are too good-natured!"

There was a tinge of sarcasm, which Mrs. Leigh overlooked. "There must be undiscovered depths in Frances's character; for it is not great men who inspire heroic passions, it is great

women who conceive them," she said, thoughtfully.

"That sounds *so* interesting; almost Emersonian, dear."

Mrs. Leigh did not answer. She was gazing at some new arrivals. Suddenly her face brightened with pleasure. "Ah! here comes Beatrice Harmony! I wonder what attitude she'll take in the matter? They were great friends at one time."

"She will do nothing quixotic; she is the embodiment of selfishness," sneered Mrs. Lloyd.

"That is a fault of the age," returned her friend. "How well she is looking!"

"Russian sables, my dear! That set never cost a penny less than five thousand, and she hasn't that a year to dress on." Mrs. Lloyd was spiteful. Beatrice Harmony was her pet aversion.

Mrs. Harmony drifted in their direction, and Mrs. Leigh extended a detaining hand.

"How-de-do, Bee; won't you join us?" she asked, cordially. She liked Mrs. Harmony and found her entertaining.

"Thanks; awfully good of you, but I really can't. I'm on my way to join Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar; they're over there in the corner."

She spoke slowly and very distinctly; it was impossible to misunderstand her. Both her listeners gasped in astonishment.

Mrs. Leigh was the first to recover. She gave a little laugh; it was a comedy, and she was vastly amused.

Mrs. Lloyd put up her lorgnette and stared curiously in the direction indicated. "So that is the bride?" she drawled. "I fancied her face was familiar."

"Have you the trick of forgetting faces? It must be convenient. But there is something about Francie Dunbar that people do not forget easily," returned Beatrice, in her most suave tones.

"You refer to the scandal?" asked Mrs. Lloyd.

Mrs. Leigh rushed into the breach. "Beatrice, they say that friendship is

the orchid of society; are you going to prove it?"

"Would it be worth while?" Beatrice was pale, but smiling.

"I really don't know, my dear," returned the older woman, kindly; then she added: "You are dining with me to-morrow; I hope you have not forgotten it?"

"Fortunately, I have a very good memory, and besides, Mrs. Leigh's dinners are events," she said, courteously; then, with a nod of her graceful head, she passed on.

"So the bride has found a champion," commented Mrs. Lloyd, disagreeably. "Well, 'birds of a feather,' and all the rest of it. I suppose it fits in this case as well as in others."

Mrs. Leigh looked bored. "Aren't Mrs. Dunbar's affairs becoming a trifle monotonous? Shall we go on? I promised Mrs. Van Alstyne to look in about six; De Lara is to sing at that hour. Are you coming?"

Mrs. Lloyd rose languidly. "Yes. That man is growing insupportable since Mrs. Van took him up. He looks like a Greek god, but he is merely a paid concert singer, and it seems so absurd to make all the to-do over him."

Mrs. Leigh moved toward the door. "I quite agree with you; he is impossible as a man, but delightful as a singer," she answered, carelessly.

Mrs. Lloyd veered whimsically. "I don't know about his impossibility; he is a gentleman. The women have gone mad over him. His rooms are full of trophies, and his mail is the despair of his secretary."

"And his vanity overweening, in consequence," interrupted Mrs. Leigh. She was not interested in De Lara's conquests.

"On the contrary, he is quite unaffected and seems rather abashed at his tremendous success."

"A pose, my dear!"

"Perhaps, but everything is a pose nowadays, from Carrie Ashton's vulgarity to Beatrice Harmony's indifference." Mrs. Lloyd drew her rich wrap closer about her shoulders and

stepped into the brougham that was drawn up to receive them.

Mrs. Leigh followed, and they drove rapidly up the Avenue.

As they went up the carpeted stoop of Mrs. Van Alstyne's house and passed into the brilliantly lighted hall, a burst of melody greeted their ears.

"After the Tyroleans at the Waldorf, this," whispered Mrs. Leigh.

Her friend caught her by the arm.

"Don't go in—wait until he has finished; the least sound annoys him!"

"How well you know his foibles!"

"He has sung for me, also. Oh! how beautiful that was!"

Silence, a storm of applause, and the two women entered the crowded rooms.

"My dear Mrs. Leigh, I feared you were not coming," purred Mrs. Van Alstyne.

"We stopped in the hall so as not to disturb De Lara; he is sensitive, I believe," replied Mrs. Leigh, smiling.

"A perfect crank; he wanted so much changed before he would open his mouth. Above all, he wanted air. Fancy expecting me to raise the blinds and spoil the effect of my rooms!"

"By the way, we saw Mr. and Mrs. Alec Dunbar at the Waldorf." Mrs. Leigh made the statement casually.

Mrs. Van Alstyne stiffened. "I heard they were in New York," she said, coldly.

"You have not seen them?"

"No; have you?"

"Ah, but I intend to."

"And I do not. Women cannot boldly defy all the conventions and expect to be received!" Mrs. Van Alstyne unfurled her fan with a sharp click.

"And men?"

"Oh, they were always privileged. Ah, how do you do, Mr. Charteris." Mrs. Van Alstyne was all smiles as she turned to greet the newcomer.

Mrs. Leigh shook her head. "Poor Frances!" she murmured, regretfully.

II

THE Watts-Dunbar divorce case had been the sensation of the preceding year.

People said that as long as Duncan Watts had closed his eyes for three years it was rather bad taste to make a row finally and carry his woes into the courts. Mrs. Dunbar, a thorough woman of the world, had been content to share her husband's fortune without sharing his life, and she had good-humoredly tolerated Frances Watts. The only remark she had ever been heard to make was that she wondered what Alec saw to admire in Frances; she possessed refinement, whereas his fancy, in Spring or Winter, had been wont to lightly turn to the banal beauties of the footlights.

After Duncan Watts had taken the initiative she was obliged to follow his lead; and though Alec made her a handsome allowance, she regretted her place at Westbury, and the horses, which were prize winners at every show.

She had three children, and she knew Alec would feel the parting from them, though he gave her up cheerfully enough.

Beatrice Harmony was with Frances the day the papers were served. The latter was in tears; she was becomingly attired in black, and a great bowl of violets testified to Alec's devotion. Frances's mother was also there.

"You are going abroad, and that is quite right," said Beatrice. "Your mother will be with you, and if you live over there quietly for a year you can come back and marry Alec, and all will be forgiven."

She spoke soothingly, but Frances shook her head.

"I never shall get over it, Bee, never! Wasn't it horrid of Duncan to behave as he did?" she wailed.

"Yes, it was horrid, and to bribe your maid! Well, comfort yourself, dear, with the assurance that we all sympathize with you." Beatrice gave her an encouraging pat on the shoulder, and rose to go.

She was tall and slender, with a graceful, willowy figure that men admired and women envied. Her black-lashed blue eyes were singularly inscrutable, and her smile intensified their expression. She looked with

mild amusement alike on the social comedies that were sadder than tears and the tragedies that were comic. She was the spirit of the century-end disillusionment. She never quite believed in either good or evil.

"Everything is possible, but nothing is probable. We are not a race of giants, and as our stature is, so is our capability for emotion. We play at being divinities, and in reality we are made of very common clay," she said once, with that faintly elusive gleam of humor that characterized her temperament.

"Don't you believe in anything?" demanded her auditor, who happened to be Frances.

"Oh, yes, in man's honor and in woman's beauty. One is as flawless as the other."

"Beatrice, what has changed you?"

"Rubbing shoulders with the world. It is a mighty disagreeable old world, Francie, and it gives hard knocks to an ambitious woman of good birth and scant income. I am not complaining. Harry never dreamed that he could lose the little he had; neither did I. We were as ignorant of pitfalls as two children who set off, hand in hand, for the Palace of Delight. *Were*—we are not ignorant now, thank goodness! Harry knows the value of a gullible investor in the stock market, and I—well, I can't give away my secret, but you must own that I am fairly successful."

Frances looked puzzled.

"But you're not happy," she protested.

This was in the first year of Alec's devotion, and Frances saw the world through a rose-colored radiance.

As she made her protest, Beatrice threw back her head.

"Happy! Dear, is any woman happy nowadays? We leave happiness for children, and—" she paused, amused at the frank dismay in her friend's face—"and to those dear little women who never grow up," she concluded, smiling affectionately at Frances.

Beatrice dazzled the simpler woman, and yet a strong bond of affection

existed between them. At Frances's first hint of trouble Beatrice had gone to her, and had shown the most womanly side of her nature to her friend. It was true that Beatrice Harmony was not happy. She had married Harry Harmony because he was handsome and had attracted her girlish fancy. He had an easy air of good-fellowship that appealed to men and women alike. At heart he was selfish, and his marriage had disappointed him.

Beatrice's uncle, from whom she had expected to inherit, assumed the matrimonial harness himself late in life, and was the proud father of twins.

"I'll give your boy a million, Bee," he had told his niece, "but a girl you will have to look out for yourselves."

It was a girl, a frail little thing with her mother's eyes, that struggled for three years to keep her hold on life, and finally succumbed to a childish illness.

And no boy came to claim the royal gift.

"Your uncle is a fool, and you can tell him so, with my compliments!" Harmony blustered, when he heard of the singular proposal.

"Tell him yourself. I do not care to brave his anger. Perhaps he thinks a man ought to be able to provide for the feminine members of his family," Beatrice had retorted, coolly.

And, after eight years of married life, five of which had been spent in a struggle to keep up appearances, Beatrice had grown weary.

"Couldn't we retrench a bit, Harry?" she asked, when an annoying reminder of a bill greeted her in her morning mail.

"Keep down the household expenses; that's where the money goes," was the reply.

"Can't you give up two clubs? Five is a large number for so young a man."

"That's like a woman's selfishness," retorted Harmony. "My clubs come under the head of business expenses!"

"Then we might dismiss the cook, and I'll manage with the two maids.

You never dine at home; and when I have no invitation out Jane can cook me a chop." She tried to speak carelessly.

Harmony stared, incredulously.

"And when we have guests—will you give them chops, too? Don't be a fool!"

Beatrice paled.

"Please do not forget that I am your wife, and as such deserving of at least a semblance of courtesy."

Then she gathered up her letters and left him to finish his breakfast alone.

Before Harmony went down town he followed her to the library.

"I say, Bee, that idea of yours isn't half-bad. Send away the cook, if you like, and when we have people in we can get outside help," he said, awkwardly.

Such little incidents as these were the things that robbed her life of its illusions. Beatrice had been heart-hungry at the time of her marriage, and had her husband taken the trouble to win her affection, she would have repaid him richly. But happiness she had now long despaired of, and had resigned herself to go her way and let him go his. There was no middle ground of common interests for them to meet upon.

Could any woman be happy with a selfish husband like Harmony, who always was sordid and sometimes brutal?

Beatrice sighed. Poor little Frances! Would Alec's love last? She needed a strong shield to protect her from the pitiless arrows of the world's skilled marksmen.

III

FRANCES went abroad with her mother, as counseled by her best friends; but, alas for her future! Alec Dunbar followed in less than a month.

Just when they were married was not generally known, but it was not quite a year after the divorce that Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar stepped from the deck of an Atlantic liner to the shores of their native land.

And then the gossip, which had barely subsided, broke forth afresh.

It appeared that a social battle was imminent. People felt bound to take sides, and Frances's friends groaned in spirit. "She's made a mess of it," Beatrice confided to Alison Deyo, a tall, athletic girl who rode to hounds—"and to the devil," her guardian averred. The world knew her as a jolly good fellow, and as for her faults, she admitted them frankly. "I am a born gambler—that's in the blood—and I like a dash of absinthe in my cocktails—that's also in the blood; but I never went back on a friend, and that's the hereditary trait I'm proud of!" she was wont to remark, and for that last attribute Beatrice had sought her out.

She was gathering Frances's friends together.

"She was sure to do that, you know, Bee! Francie always lost her head when it came to a stiffish bit; she hasn't a true eye nor a steady hand; but I did think Alec Dunbar would have shown more sense," responded Alison, frankly. "What are you going to do, Bee?"

"Nothing as yet—merely treat her as if all this hadn't happened," answered Beatrice, with a sigh.

"Give her the hand of good-fellowship? Well, I'm with you."

And the day after Frances and her husband arrived at their hotel Beatrice and Alison sent up their cards.

The meeting was constrained at first. Both of the visitors appeared to resent the presence of Alec as he came out of an inner room to greet them. This constraint wore off, however, by the time the visit came to an end.

When they left, Alec took his wife tenderly in his arms. "Well, little woman," he said, "it's going to be all right. Beatrice Harmony is a trump!" Then he kissed her, and to his surprise found that her eyes were full of tears.

But scarcely half a dozen of their set followed the example of the two leaders, and Beatrice, meeting Alison at a luncheon a week later, shook her head.

"You are not going to give up, are you?" demanded Alison, with scorn.

"Of course not; but I see we cannot force things. You are unmarried, and I'm poor; neither of us is strong enough," answered Beatrice, quietly.

"Try Mrs. Lloyd."

"She hates me."

"Or Mrs. Van Alstyne."

"She is too busy winning that siren-voiced tenor."

"Well, then, Mrs. Leigh."

"Oh, if I could! At least, I can try."

But it was several days before she ran across Mrs. Leigh, and then, just as she was about to make her request, there was an interruption.

The same afternoon she stopped in to see Frances. Beatrice followed the maid into the boudoir, where Frances, suffering from a headache, with black rings under her eyes, was lying on a couch.

"Oh, Bee, I'm so glad you've come!" was her greeting. "I'm so upset! Sit down, dear; I want to tell you how I've been treated. I came face to face with Helena Lloyd, and she pretended she didn't see me. After all I did for her when she was having trouble with Gus Ronalds! Can you believe there could be such ingratitude?" Frances's tears came readily, and now they coursed rapidly down her woe-begone countenance.

Beatrice stooped and kissed her.

"You don't have to depend on women like Mrs. Lloyd; you have true friends who won't fail you. Now, do stop crying, dear; I hate tears as much as a man does. Where is Alec?"

"He went out after lunch; he will be furious when I tell him."

"Don't. Take my advice, Francie, and don't tell Alec of the little, spiteful things women do to you. Tell him of the pleasant things."

"I shall always tell Alec everything." Frances's tone was defiant.

"Well, make an exception of slights. Alec is one of the best fellows in the world, but he is only a man, my dear, and men value us in proportion to the amount of approbation we receive. Always repeat the compliments to him

—men like to have their wives admired—but don't let him suspect for one moment that he has made a bad bargain."

Frances looked aggrieved. She rolled her handkerchief into a ball. "You say very peculiar things, Bee," she said, petulantly.

Beatrice smiled as one would at a spoiled child. "Perhaps I do," she returned, indulgently, "but it irritated me to hear of Helena Lloyd's foolish behavior. By the end of the season she will cringe to you."

"Then you think it will come out all right? Oh, Bee, sometimes I wonder if I have ruined Alec's life as well as my own. He never says anything, but he must feel the slights as much as I do!"

"A man's skin is tougher. Besides, he has his relaxations—his clubs, his horses. Don't worry your precious head over Alec. As long as he has you, Francie, he won't regret. It is very beautiful to see love like his in these matter-of-fact days," Beatrice concluded, as she rose to go.

As she left the hotel she met Alec. He turned and walked by her side.

She had given up her brougham that Winter, along with her other feminine luxuries, and she tried to persuade herself and others that she liked walking. Alec thanked her for her kindness to his wife, but she made light of it.

"I am really fond of Francie, and besides, it would please me to make certain women acknowledge her existence; it would show me that I have not lost all my influence."

Alec Dunbar looked at her curiously. He noted with approval the firm, erect carriage of her proud head, the elasticity of her step, the exquisitely fitting cloth gown, the faultlessly gloved hands; but though it was cold she wore no furs, and he remembered her as formerly muffled in them.

"If you set out to accomplish anything, Bee, you can't fail, and I would rather have you for Francie's champion than any other woman in New York."

"Thank you, Alec," she said, simply.

"How is Harmony getting on?"

"So so. Millions are not made in Wall street nowadays."

"Forgive me for speaking frankly, but how do you manage?"

"Oh, we scrape along. I use the stage or the cable cars, unless a cab is absolutely necessary. I dress simply, and as I cannot afford sables I brave the cold winds, which this year the Lord seems to temper to my unprotected throat. Now, Alec, are all your questions answered?" She gave a mocking little laugh as she finished, which robbed her speech of its pathos.

"Did you see Francie's sables?" he asked, with apparent irrelevance.

"Yes; they are magnificent."

"Hunter can duplicate them."

"The fact does not interest me, Alec; they are out of my reach."

"Perhaps not. Believe me, Beatrice, I am very grateful for all you have done and are going to do for Francie," he said, earnestly.

The next day Beatrice received the set of sables. A card was inscribed: "With the gratitude of Francie's husband," and Beatrice buried her face in the soft fur.

She threw the gorgeous cape over her shoulders, tucked her hands into the muff, and stood before the mirror rapturously. "I must send them back, of course," she concluded. Then she decided to wait until Harmony had seen them.

He looked them over critically.

"Crown sables, by George! As handsome as any I've ever seen," he announced.

"What shall I do with them, Harry?" asked Beatrice, tremulously.

He stared at her a moment and then answered, roughly:

"Wear them. What did you suppose they were meant for?"

IV

So Beatrice wore the sables. People stared and gossiped; but she kept her own counsel, and donned them smilingly.

A few days later she met Alec on the Avenue.

"They will keep me warm, in spite of the cold looks leveled at me by Mrs. Lloyd & Co.," she said to him, gaily.

"It can't affect your position, can it?" he asked, anxiously.

"No, not unless society has taken exception to my want of means, my inability to reciprocate for its priceless favors."

"A sneer doesn't become you, Bee. I know you prize your position more than you do anything else," he answered, earnestly.

She laughed carelessly, but her eyes were grateful. Sympathy was as welcome to her as to most sensitive women.

"One word about my own affairs," Alec went on, gravely. "Are they progressing?"

"Frankly, no. You have returned too soon. In the end you must win; the deity we all worship will finally reinstate you."

"The deity?"

"Mammon; and you are so well endowed with this world's goods!" Then she changed her tone. "At present, I would advise a retreat. Go into the country for a while. At Westbury you will have Alison Deyo as a neighbor, and she is a power in the hunting set. It's too bad Francie doesn't ride; but you can attend all the meets; and let Francie show herself boldly. This is a case in which audacity will count for a great deal."

"I don't like the idea of running away."

"My dear man, that is strategy! Perhaps you think I am not earning my sables——"

He made a gesture of dissent.

"Beatrice, what has come over you?"

Beatrice laughed. "That is what Francie asks, with the same intonation of childlike surprise! Do you think I believe in purely philanthropic motives?"

He answered her question with another.

"Have you found nothing but selfishness in the world?"

"Nothing. Ah, Alec, women are

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"Frankly, no. You have returned too soon. In the end you must win; the deity we all worship will finally reinstate you."

"The deity?"

"Mammon; and you are so well endowed with this world's goods!" Then she changed her tone. "At present, I would advise a retreat. Go into the country for a while. At Westbury you will have Alison Deyo as a neighbor, and she is a power in the hunting set. It's too bad Francie doesn't ride; but you can attend all the meets; and let Francie show herself boldly. This is a case in which audacity will count for a great deal."

"I don't like the idea of running away."

"My dear man, that is strategy! Perhaps you think I am not earning my sables——"

He made a gesture of dissent.

"Beatrice, what has come over you?"

Beatrice laughed. "That is what Francie asks, with the same intonation of childlike surprise! Do you think I believe in purely philanthropic motives?"

He answered her question with another.

"Have you found nothing but selfishness in the world?"

"Nothing. Ah, Alec, women are

apt to judge all men by those who are nearest to them! You know what my father is, and you know my husband. As for the others, I hear about them, but know them intimately, how can I? If they step over the line of friendship, it is to make love to me, and, curiously enough, modern as I am, that is one of the things I object to."

It was characteristic of Beatrice to ignore the fact that Alec might object to her remark as being too personal. He glanced at her quickly, but her eyes met his frankly, and he saw that she had not meant to give offense.

The following week he opened his house at Westbury.

The jolly, fun-loving crowd there forgot the ugly scandal, and only remembered that Greytowers was the handsomest place in the colony and famous for its hospitality.

Ignoring the change in mistresses, they accepted every invitation, and the house was, as of old, the rendezvous for the smartest set in the county.

Alison Deyo wrote a few lines to Beatrice.

"They have taken the plunge and are swimming nicely, with their heads above water. Alec rides to the hounds, and Frances plays golf, and golf is a religion at Westbury."

Beatrice bided her time.

After she had matured a plan she went to see Mrs. Leigh.

"I like Francie Dunbar, but active partisanship is fatiguing," Mrs. Leigh had said, when Beatrice had first approached her. Now she listened attentively to Beatrice's scheme.

"Mr. Charteris shall help us," Beatrice said. "He is the richest unmarried man in New York, and his taste is perfect."

"They say he admires you greatly, dear."

Mrs. Leigh could not refrain from this feminine pleasantries. She had wanted to attach Charteris to herself. It was the fashion for a woman to play patroness to some young man, and Charteris would have suited her; but he had views of his own, and pre-

ferred devotion in general to slavery in particular to Mrs. Leigh.

Beatrice did not show the least sign of confusion, as she answered: "For that reason I think I may be able to count on his assistance. He usually gives one dinner, just before Lent, with some titled foreigner as guest of honor. Well, this year I propose that the seat of honor be given to Frances Dunbar."

Mrs. Leigh looked amused.

"You must be confident of your power, Bee!"

"Perhaps over-confident. I can only try." Beatrice rose to go. "You will not refuse to sit at dinner with her?"

"At Paul Charteris's table? Oh, no. But tell me, frankly, why do you champion her cause?"

"She is my friend."

"And friendship's claims are so strong?"

"In this case, yes. I like Frances; she fits in well with my moods; she has all the faith that I lack, all the ignorance I have lost. You know they say we women choose our friends as we choose our gowns, for their becomingness; and I fancy we set each other off. Good-bye, dear Mrs. Leigh."

V

THE maid brought Paul Charteris's card to Beatrice one afternoon about five o'clock.

She took it languidly. She was very tired, and she turned it over between her fingers, trying to make up her mind whether to receive him or not.

Then she thought of Frances.

"Very well; show him up, Marie."

As the maid left the room, Beatrice crossed to the mirror and glanced critically at her reflection.

"I look pale and interesting, and indifference always attracts men like Paul Charteris; but there is too much light. He may see the tired eyes, but he must not see the lines at their corners."

So she turned two of the lights low

and drew the rose-colored shade over the reading-lamp.

Her boudoir was simply furnished. A few good water colors on the walls, a cabinet of curios, an inlaid mahogany desk, some odd tables, a couple of lamps, and perhaps half-a-dozen chairs.

Beatrice resumed her seat by the fireplace and awaited her guest. He stood a moment in the doorway, gazing eagerly at her. Then she held out a welcoming hand.

"Isn't it wretched out?" she remarked.

"Beastly!" he returned; "but it makes one appreciate the warmth within. Your room is typical of yourself," he added, looking round with interested eyes. It was the first time he had been received in her den.

Beatrice shrugged her shoulders.

"It's rather meagre."

"Its simplicity attracts," he urged.

"Perhaps I do not like it called simple."

He stared into the fire before answering her light objection. "In its simplicity lies its charm. Where there is much adornment one wonders if it be not piled on to cover emptiness; but there is something very subtle about the mystery that simplicity conceals," he said.

Charteris was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with light-brown hair, hazel eyes, a beautiful mouth and strong white teeth. At the first glance he looked barely twenty, at the second one might say he was thirty; in reality, he was nearer forty. He was a typical man of the world, with a firm belief in the superiority of his sex. He admired all pretty women, and saw no reason to notice the existence of the others. He had been through college, and had spent ten years in travel, penetrating into the heart of Africa to shoot elephants and accompanying an Arctic expedition to gratify a thirst for unusual adventure. He was rich enough to indulge every caprice. After he had exhausted the pleasures of the chase he had returned to America some three years before.

His arrival was the signal for a cult of hero-worship.

He took it good-naturedly, being shrewd enough to perceive its true value. But, while he was a master in the delicate art of flirtation—with a trick of lowering his voice and throwing a world of meaning into his eyes—he had no intention of surrendering his liberty; and he skilfully evaded the traps set for him by match-making matrons.

Beatrice attracted his attention from the first moment of their meeting, and he was enough of a sportsman to appreciate the possibilities of danger and excitement in such a pursuit. She was called indifferent, but that was because her heart was undiscovered territory. He liked the rôle of explorer, so he began fencing skilfully, knowing that she delighted in the chase of an elusive meaning. She rose to the bait, as he had hoped she would.

She picked up a fire-screen and held it before her face. "It is the subtlety of our sex opposed to the brute strength of yours," she replied. "The old fable of the lion and the mouse."

"What a simile," he smiled, "for a woman to use!"

"Perhaps it is because mice have our very qualities that we shrink from them."

He took up the book she had been reading before his arrival. "Ouida!" and he made no further comment.

"Are you surprised?" she asked, smiling.

"I can't see what you have to learn from her."

"You are not an admirer?"

"I have only read 'Under Two Flags.' I came across it in Algiers, and read it for local color."

"Then you cannot judge. This is her latest and her best." Beatrice held out her hand for the book. As their fingers touched, a thrill went through his stalwart frame.

She opened the volume as if to read a selection, and then changed her mind.

"What could you learn from a

paragraph? It would be like constructing a woman from the arch of her eyebrow," she said, conclusively.

"That would be a fascinating speculation. Read me anything; I shall listen most attentively," he pleaded, eagerly.

"No, it would not be fair—to the author." She smiled as she laid the book on the table.

There was a pause, and then Charteris spoke again.

"Mrs. Harmony, I am going to ask a favor. I am giving a dinner on the fourteenth of next month."

Beatrice gasped nervously. The fourteenth—that would be in three weeks.

"Your annual?" she asked, lightly, to conceal her agitation.

"Yes, but I have cut the number down; I shall limit it to twenty."

"And the guest of honor?"

"An innovation. We have made enough fuss over foreigners. I propose to inaugurate a new scheme, to honor the American woman, to make her queen of my feast. My list comprises ten of the handsomest women in New York, and the seat at my right hand—may I offer it to you?"

His voice vibrated with eagerness.

"You are too good," Beatrice murmured, brokenly.

He drew his chair closer. "Beatrice, you know what I think of you!"

"Mr. Charteris, I beg of you—" She put out both hands.

"Beatrice, you are cruel. Will you keep up this farce of indifference forever?"

"Stop—you must stop! You are displeasing me very much."

"Is it ever displeasing to a woman to be told that she is loved?"

"I don't know about other women, but I do know that you men are all alike. You think we can't live without some man's worship. I don't ask for love—I don't need it. I have other things to compensate me for its absence. I shall not even urge the farce of my husband's affection. He has mocked too openly at marriage for me to think you have not heard,

but, I repeat, I am content with my life as it is. Do you think you are the only man that has first pitied and then persecuted me?"

Beatrice forgot Frances in her scorn.

Stung by her words, he sprang to his feet.

"If I could believe you—believe that it is really indifference to all men, and not a mask to cloak your preference for one!" he exclaimed, bitterly.

Beatrice raised her eyes to his angry face, and a maddening smile swept across her lips.

"Does it amuse you to insult me like this?—for, I assure you, it does not amuse me," she said, slowly.

"Bee, forgive me; I was mad!"

"Mrs. Harmony to you, now and at all times."

"Then I am hopelessly disgraced?"

"I fear so."

He began pacing up and down the room.

"Would you object to resuming your seat? You make me nervous."

He paused in front of her.

"Will nothing ever move you? Why have you the power to torture me? My God! sometimes I feel as if I could kill you."

Beatrice shrugged her shoulders.

"That is because you insist upon crediting me with motives I do not possess. You cannot touch my heart, because I have none. That sounds trite, but I mean that I have no feeling, no emotion, no—love. When you indulge in heroics, you bore me."

He turned from her with a muttered imprecation.

"Some day I shall force you into a show of feeling!" he said, desperately.

"Do you think I should hate you for that? Ah, do not be angry with me! There, I am sorry I have tormented you. Come, let us be friends again." Beatrice's smile was very winning, and her voice was singularly sweet.

"Your friendship—I have not lost that?" he asked, bewildered by her sudden change of tone.

"Do you care for it very much?"

"There is nothing that I would rather have, . . . except your love."

"Perhaps, some day, I shall ask for a proof of your devotion."

"I shall not fail you."

She motioned to a chair near hers, and he seated himself obediently.

"I am curious about your list. Ten of the handsomest women in New York! Whom have you chosen to be my satellites?" she asked, with mock earnestness.

"Mrs. Van Alstyne——"

"Tall, fair, superbly gowned. Yes, she will do." Beatrice was critical.

"—Mrs. Ashton——"

"Dark beauty of a gypsy type. Seat them near each other; they will contrast well."

"—Mrs. Deyo——"

"I prefer Alison; she is more attractive than her sister-in-law, but I presume you bar unmarried women."

"—Mrs. Lloyd——"

"Do you include Mrs. Lloyd in your list of beauties? She and Mrs. Van will quarrel over De Lara—they always do—and wrangles disturb my dinner. Who else?"

"—Mrs. Parthington, Mrs. Bryce, Mrs. Van Tassel Smyth, Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Leigh. To me Mrs. Leigh has more than mere beauty; she has charm and tact—all that makes a woman admirable."

"I like Mrs. Leigh, too; she is wholesome. She doesn't pretend to be what she is not."

"She has no need of pretense. She is what she is."

"You misunderstand me; I mean she does not gush."

"Mrs. Lloyd makes up for her in that regard, and they always travel together."

"Yes, they complement each other."

"Is my list satisfactory?"

Beatrice half-closed her eyes and stared into the fire.

"And if I found one name lacking?" she said, finally.

"Whose?"

"When do the invitations go out?"

"Next week."

"Let me think it over until Friday; perhaps I can win you to my way of thinking."

"I am already won," he protested, eagerly.

"No, not now, not to-day."

He rose to go.

"I shall see you to-night?" She had also risen, and she held out her hand with a charming gesture of friendliness.

"I presume so."

"I may have a dance?"

"If you are good, two. Don't thank me; your step suits mine, and I would sit out a waltz rather than dance it with an inferior partner."

"You require perfection," he murmured, meaningly.

"In a dance, yes," she replied, with a graceful gesture and a look that might mean little or much.

VI

DURING the interval between Tuesday and Friday Charteris lived in a state of suspense. Though he had never expected to win Beatrice Harmony easily, he realized now that there was a possibility of eventual failure. Women had spoiled him, and he had come to believe that he conferred a favor in asking for their love. He was a power socially, both on account of his family and his immense wealth; and this was the first time that a woman had proved wholly unresponsive to his efforts to win her regard.

"Sometimes I think women have absolutely no attributes in common," he said, moodily, to Burton Edwards the day after his last encounter with Beatrice.

"There is certainly no universal guide to the feminine affections. Stumped again, Charteris?"

"Each one is queerer than the others," was the response.

Burton Edwards was a clean-shaven, muscular man about thirty-five, with an international reputation as a yachtsman and a wholesome dread of

matrimony. "Why can't the women let us alone?" he would grumble. "I haven't a million, nor even half a one; and it's as much as I can do to support myself, without adding a wife to my burden. With you it's different, Charteris; you wouldn't feel the expense of a harem!"

Charteris laughed at such expressions. They were confidential friends, and Edwards had not been slow to see that Charteris's affair was not progressing favorably.

"If I weren't stumped I wouldn't be philosophizing," he returned, impatiently.

"Perhaps she really is invulnerable," Edwards suggested, with a hint of irony.

"No woman is bullet proof."

"Get silver bullets. They strike home in some cases."

"Insinuating that she is a protégée of His Satanic Majesty? That's chivalrous!"

"Is your conduct irreproachable? Why pursue your quarry so relentlessly? There are plenty willing enough to listen to you."

"I want her."

"Well, my boy, I wish you luck. Good-bye," and Edwards went out, humming.

Charteris threw himself into an arm-chair to think. After all, it was rather despicable of him to persecute her with his attentions. She stood securely on her pedestal, a statue of purity, and he sought to drag her down.

That she would continue coldly indifferent he doubted. Should he stand aside and watch some other man awaken the love light in her eyes? It was not in his nature to be so generous. He had made a cult of self, and he sacrificed to it. Woman's honor went into the furnace along with the unbridled emotions of youth. He was so rich that he was a law unto himself, and he lived in a world of which money was king.

He dwelt on Beatrice's wish to add a name to his list. She should have her wish, but he would make her feel that she was incurring an obligation.

Payment must be made, sooner or later.

Jewels could not buy her; position she had; love she disdained. Well, there was one thing she desired, and needed his help to obtain.

That thing she should have, but the price must be paid.

He came to this conclusion slowly; and the significance of it burned into his brain, blinding him to the cowardly aspect of his conduct. Nothing for nothing, was his creed, and he would live up to it.

He rose, crossed over to the side-board and took a long drink of whiskey and water. Then he entered his dressing-room and rang for his valet. "Did you send the order for roses, to be delivered at five o'clock to Mrs. Harmony?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"And the bonbons for Miss Bryce?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did a box come from Buffon's?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll put that in my pocket. My dinner coat, Watkins. If Mr. Edwards stops in, tell him I am dining at the club, and afterward may look in at the Merry-Go-Round."

"Yes, sir."

At the Merry-Go-Round Music Hall, La Caprice, one of the latest French importations, was chanting French ditties and elevating her heels nightly.

Charteris had promised her a horse-shoe for luck, and as he took the case the valet handed him, and touched the spring, a look of surprise came into his face.

Had he really ordered it as large as that? It was almost too handsome for the adorning of Caprice. How it would have glistened among the laces of Beatrice's corsage!

Thinking of it in relation to Beatrice, it seemed designed for her.

"I wonder, if I sent it anonymously, would she keep it? It is worth trying. As for Caprice, a cheque for a hundred will please her just as well; and few women could resist this—it is worthy of royalty."

He snapped the case shut and put

it away; then he lit a cigarette and went out.

Five men and two women gathered in Caprice's apartments after the show. Caprice was in her dressing-room, changing her gown, but the door was open, and she maintained her part in the general conversation.

"Are you preparing some wonderful toilet to-night, Caprice? We are all starving," cried Burton Edwards.

"I am going to astonish you to-night, messieurs," replied Caprice, in excellent English; in fact, her mother was an American, and Caprice herself was born in Chicago. "Is Charteris there?"

"No; he has not come. I think he is deserting you, *ma belle*." This from Gus Ronalds, the first husband of Helena Lloyd, a man-about-town, who never ceased to thank heaven for his escape back to bachelorhood.

Laughter greeted his remark.

Aimée and Clarisse were exultant over the prospect of Caprice's downfall.

"Much you know about it! He is coming to-night, and he is bringing me—but I shall not tell you; it is a secret. *Vlà*, there he comes, and here am I!"

Charteris entered the door at the same moment Caprice emerged from her dressing-room.

A murmur of admiration greeted her appearance. She was a beautiful woman, and to-night she appeared *en grande toilette*—a stately brocade, roses on a white ground, cut very décolleté, and sweeping behind her in a long train. The dress added inches to her height and gave her a dignity foreign to her usual careless abandon.

"Hail to the queen!" a voice cried, and there was a ripple of mirth over the room.

"Perhaps you think I cannot play the part!" exclaimed the singer. "Wait; you shall see. Paul, your hand! Ladies and gallants all, supper!"

The supper was delicious. The lobster was perfect and the wine properly cold and abundant. Caprice,

reclining gracefully in her chair, pledged Charteris again and again.

"Life without love would be a supper without champagne; I could not imagine it, could you, Paul?" she said, dreamily.

"Neither the one nor the other," he answered, lightly.

"And yet there are poor wretches . . ." she murmured, and held out her glass to be filled again.

"Well, at least they have love; that costs nothing," put in Ronalds, who was on the other side of Caprice.

"Doesn't it, though? Ah, *mon cher*, it may cost you men nothing, but it costs us poor women—what does it not cost?—our lives sometimes."

"And our reputations at all times," added Clarisse, making a face; "especially when we fall in love with such as you, Gus."

"So! Well, here's to love!" Caprice sprang to her feet. "Who will pledge me, Burt?"

Edwards clinked glasses with her.

"In your own words, Caprice, love is the champagne of life," he said, then he drained his glass.

"Gus!" Caprice cried, holding out her glass to him.

"Love is the devil's gift to torment humanity!" he returned.

A vigorous protest followed; and then Caprice turned to Charteris.

"What have you to say of love, Paul?" she demanded, caressingly.

"Love? It is the scent of a violet, the perfume of self-sacrifice," he said, indolently. Then he started up. "Who of us knows what love is? But this is a good substitute for it," and he kissed the full red lips that were raised temptingly to his.

Caprice, flushed with wine, leaned her head against his shoulder.

"*Tu m'aimes?*" she whispered, softly.

"*Tu le sais*," he returned, with indulgence.

"And there is no truth in what they say—that you are tired of me?"

He touched her perfumed hair with his lips for answer; but she was not satisfied.

"*On dit* that she is a mondaine and very beautiful."

Charteris frowned.

"Ah, it is true, Paul!" Caprice faced him with flashing eyes, then she gave a short laugh. "What nonsense! I don't doubt you. Have you brought my horseshoe?" she went on.

Charteris hoped she would not make a scene. The wine had begun to affect her, and it was apt to make her quarrelsome. He wished he had brought the thing; after all, he had promised it, and he prided himself on being a man of his word.

"No, Caprice, I have not; but never mind, I'll send you a cheque in the morning, and you can select one for yourself," he whispered in reply.

Caprice drew herself up, paling under her paint. Then she suddenly struck him across the mouth with the back of her jeweled hand.

"Liar!" she said.

The blow was a hard one, and the stones cut his lips and drew blood.

No one spoke. Consternation seized on the other guests. Charteris touched his handkerchief to his mouth, and rose slowly to his feet.

"Under the circumstances," he said, smiling oddly, "there is but one thing for me to do. I wish you all good-night."

He included Caprice in his bow, and made for the door.

Burton Edwards sprang up hastily.

"Wait, Charteris! I'm going with you," he cried, seizing his hat and coat.

Caprice sat calmly, insolently, watching their departure, but when the door closed after them, she screamed, angrily:

"Go! Go! All of you! Get out of here! I hate you all. Paul, Paul!"

Then she laid her head on the table and sobbed bitterly.

VII

CHARTERIS'S lip was swollen for two or three days.

"Little devil!" was his only comment on the affair; and Burton Ed-

wards, being a man, only nodded, and no more was said.

Caprice wrote, making an abject apology, and begging him to come back.

He crumpled the note in his hand.

"There is no answer," he said to the waiting messenger.

Then she appeared one morning at his rooms.

Charteris was in the bath.

"Get rid of her, quietly if you can, but get rid of her," he said to his valet, who looked terrified at the prospect.

That night he went to a dance, expecting to meet Beatrice. She was in black, as usual, and he gave a start of surprise when he saw that the only ornament she wore was the magnificent diamond horseshoe.

He had sent it the day before, anonymously, but he had not dreamed that she would receive it in this fashion.

Beatrice, as she opened the leather case, had not been able to repress an exclamation. Was that great, glittering thing meant for her? Who could have sent it? There were but three men whom she could regard as possibilities—Gus Ronalds, who had pestered her all Winter with his unwelcome attentions; Alec Dunbar, who might have added to the bribe of sables, and Paul Charteris.

"If I put it aside, I may know in time; but if I wear it to-night, where I shall meet both Gus Ronalds and Paul, I shall know at once. If neither of them betrays himself, it will be a proof of dear old Alec's stupidity. I am doing what I can for Francie. Ah! I hope it is not Charteris. I have a favor to ask of him, and I cannot ask favors of a man to whom I am already heavily indebted."

She met Ronalds as she entered the ballroom. His eyes fell at once on the glittering ornament at her breast. He frowned and bowed coldly as he passed on.

"It was not Gus Ronalds. He would not have thought of anything so subtle. An old superstition says it is unlucky to throw away a horse-

shoe. It must have been Charteris. How dared he!"

It was late before she and Charteris came face to face; and then the gleam in his eyes told her that her suspicions were correct.

After their waltz, which was the supper dance, he led her away from the crowd.

"I will get a waiter to bring us something here," he said, ushering her into an alcove screened by palms.

Beatrice sank gratefully on the divan and closed her eyes.

When he came back he was followed by a waiter bearing a tray laden with delicacies. Charteris improvised a table, and, as they ate, Beatrice kept up a flow of small talk, steering the conversation skilfully away from personal topics.

After one or two rebuffs Charteris launched boldly into the depths.

"You said that to-night you would suggest another name for my dinner list. Have you forgotten that?"

Beatrice drew her breath sharply.

With his diamonds on her breast she knew he would not refuse; but he would interpret her request in his own fashion. Could she, even for Frances's sake, lower her self-respect—win him by a trick? No, Alec was right; her pride was still paramount.

The struggle was over, the question settled. To-morrow she would return the horseshoe and be a free woman. Perhaps she ought also to return the sables (it was the end of the season, and she could not wear them much longer), then Alec would understand that in some way she had failed him.

She played nervously with her fan.

"After thinking it over, I have no suggestion to make; your list is perfect," she answered, in a low tone.

He stared incredulously.

"You are putting me off; you are trifling with me," he said, reproachfully.

"I have no right to suggest a change." She was temporizing. Mrs. Leigh would say she had been too sure of herself.

"I give you the right."

"No, no. I will be honest with you. Had not something occurred, I could have proffered my request, but not now; it would not be . . . honorable."

He paled a little. He did not understand. She wore his diamonds, but she rejected his aid. He would help her in spite of herself, he thought. Personally, he cared neither for Frances nor for Alec Dunbar, but if it would please Beatrice to see Mrs. Dunbar reinstated, as he had reason to believe it would, then that reinstatement, in so far as it lay in his power to bring it about, should be offered as another pledge of his devotion.

"You could do nothing dishonorable, Mrs. Harmony," he murmured, "and I am sorry if I have offended you."

"You do not understand."

"Perhaps I do. I am beginning to realize that the *motif* of all woman-kind is the same; only the expression of it varies."

Beatrice frowned.

"You know what I would ask?"

She was playing again with fire.

He smiled as he stooped to pick up her fan, which had fallen unheeded to the floor.

"I flatter myself I am a mind-reader to that extent."

Beatrice lapsed into silence.

This man was weaving a net around her; would she be hopelessly entangled in its meshes?

She imagined herself wholly in his power, struggling to break the silken cords that cut into her conscience.

The vision was very real, with its prescience of danger. She was stricken with terror.

"Let me go! Let me go!" she cried, suddenly; and then the realization of what her words implied overwhelmed her with confusion.

He started as if he doubted the evidence of his ears.

Let her go! How could she divine that in his mind he had compassed her destruction; held her in a grasp from which she was powerless to escape?

VIII

BEATRICE was thoroughly exhausted when she reached home. Marie exclaimed in dismay at her appearance. "Madame will be ill if she does not take care of herself," protested the warm-hearted Frenchwoman.

"I am so tired, Marie, I should like to sleep forever."

Marie raised her eyebrows, then began swiftly to take off her mistress's wraps. Beatrice interrupted her.

"Where is the box this came in?" she asked, unfastening the horseshoe.

Marie brought her the leather case, and Beatrice laid the diamonds in their bed of white satin.

"It is very beautiful, isn't it, Marie? It is worth a king's ransom; yes, a soul's ransom."

She held it out at arm's length, regarding it speculatively. "If I took it and wore it, even if I asked for another, I should not be doing more than several women I know. I could call it a bet, a philopona, anything I liked; and I don't believe Harry would care," she mused.

Marie was brushing her hair.

"He understood that it was this that stood in the way of my request. He intimated that he would grant it if I but asked. Francie, I have only to smile and you will be able to resume your place in a world that is not half good enough for you. It is a terrible responsibility that is laid upon my shoulders. If I could care it would not be so bad. Perhaps my moral scruples would vanish in the face of a real passion; but I am so indifferent. Not even to pique Helena Lloyd can I summon up enthusiasm for the game. Francie must wait, and he must have his horseshoe back. It is not throwing away my luck—that went long ago."

Marie disappeared, but returned shortly, bearing a tray.

"Here is a cup of hot milk for Madame; it will make Madame sleep, and she needs rest."

Beatrice smiled. "You are very thoughtful, Marie, and I shall drink it, if only to please you."

It was late the next morning when Beatrice awoke, and it was noon before she summoned up enough courage to leave her warm bed. She was not very strong, and the extreme lassitude that came over her at times would have worried her had she desired to cling to life. But the future, that seemed to portend only a repetition of the past, did not interest her. She was quite sincere in her wish to not pass her fortieth birthday.

"I can imagine myself thirty-nine—a few white hairs at my temples, incipient crows' feet, that slenderness that has kept my figure youthful turning to angularity; but forty—oh, no, I cannot imagine myself forty!" she said, one day, and her auditor did not know whether to laugh with her or at her.

For Beatrice, like all pretty women, laid great stress upon youth; and the knowledge that some day she should be old tormented her.

As she was dressing, Mrs. Leigh sent up her card.

Beatrice slipped into a tea-gown to receive her.

"Just getting up, Bee? I am afraid you are lazy!" Mrs. Leigh took in every detail of Beatrice's hasty toilet.

"Oh, I plead guilty to the charge," she said, lightly.

"I want to congratulate you on the success of your scheme," Mrs. Leigh went on.

Beatrice looked her inquiry.

"Mr. Charteris told me about his dinner last night, and mentioned the fact that both Frances and Alec Dunbar were to be present."

"He told you that! When?"

"Just after supper; he left early, I believe," continued Mrs. Leigh. "Did you notice his lip? I heard that some woman struck him. Of course, it is not true, but the bruise is certainly a peculiar one." Mrs. Leigh was frankly curious.

"I did not notice it," Beatrice answered, truthfully. She was dwelling on the news of more personal importance that Mrs. Leigh had communicated. He had granted her request, then, without waiting for her to prof-

fer it. She almost forgave him for the horseshoe.

Mrs. Leigh continued:

"The young men of this age are so rapid; their devotion is capable of being divided into several equal parts; and of course Charteris's money gives him unusual opportunities. I want to go to the Merry-Go-Round one night next week; they say that La Caprice is really worth hearing."

"Mrs. Ashton says she is the limit. Frankly, for my part, these women disgust me with their coarseness."

"They connect her name with that of Paul Charteris."

"Perhaps they do. Really, I am not surprised; it is scarcely a step downward from Carrie Ashton's chancetables to La Caprice."

"Carrie does go pretty far."

"It would not have been tolerated a few years ago; but to-day the battle between mondaine and demi-mondaine is waged with the same weapons. Riskiness attracts men; well, the grand dame can be as *risqué* as the soubrette, and, being more of a novelty from an aristocratic source, it gives it an added charm, I suppose."

Beatrice was vehement in her denunciation. Mrs. Ashton and her intimates were gaining a reputation as tellers of daring stories and singers of untranslatable French songs.

"So you do not care to accompany us? I had selected Monday night; a small party—Mrs. Van, De Lara, Charteris, Burton Edwards, you and I. Won't you change your mind?" Mrs. Leigh paused. Charteris was the bait—would Beatrice rise to it?

"You are kind, but I am previously engaged for Monday."

"Then I shall ask Mrs. Lloyd. I know better than to bring you two into close company."

Beatrice patted a fold of her gown.

"My dear Mrs. Leigh, Mrs. Lloyd's presence, or absence, affects me in the same way."

"Is she to be at Mr. Charteris's dinner?"

"You must ask him that question."

The caller rose.

"I shall. I imagine it will be quite

interesting," she ventured. "His dinners usually are."

"And a novelty."

"Yes; novelty is his fad. So you really will not join us on Monday?"

Beatrice shook her head. She accompanied her visitor to the door, talking brightly; but after Mrs. Leigh had gone the smile faded from her face as she wondered whether the world was beginning to busy itself with her name.

"The world," she said, wearily; "we speak of the world when we only mean that ripple of it called Society!"

IX

THE next morning Beatrice received two letters, one from Frances, the other from Alec. Frances wrote five incoherent pages, the gist of which was that she had received Charteris's invitation, and, while she appreciated his kindness, she quite dreaded facing a probable frost. At Westbury people were kinder, and not one had made her feel the delicacy of her position; she was very well contented with out-of-town life, and she didn't believe she cared to enter the social arena in New York again, but Alec thought she owed it to herself to claim that which was her due. In the end, Beatrice gleaned the intelligence that Frances and her husband would come up to town the beginning of the week, and that Frances had ordered a dream of a gown to wear.

Alec's note consisted of a few lines.

"I know this is all your doing, Bee, and I cannot tell you how grateful I am. Perhaps some day I shall have a chance to prove my sincerity."

Beatrice shivered. A strain of mysticism in her nature made her dislike anything in the nature of a prophecy. Would she ever be forced to ask his help? She hoped not.

After putting the letter away she dressed carefully and drove to Brent Thomas's studio. He was a clever young Englishman, the fad at present, and he was giving a reception to

show his latest work, an exquisite portrait of Mrs. Parthington.

Grace Parthington was a stately blonde, with a passion for art and for artists. She was in the centre of a group, beaming her thanks at the compliments her friends showered upon her.

Beatrice looked at the portrait critically.

"How do you like it?" asked Charteris, who had made his way to her side.

Beatrice turned slightly toward him. "If I were Mrs. Parthington I would not sit in the same room with my idealized self. Unfortunately, we cannot all see her through Brent Thomas's eyes."

Then she moved away. He followed her.

"Sit down and let me get you a cup of tea," he urged.

"You are always getting me something," she said, with a smile.

"Hoping one day to chance upon the thing you wish."

Brent Thomas came up. He was anxious for a word of approval from Beatrice. She had been known to make a reputation by a clever phrase.

"It is beautiful, and the arrangement of the drapery over the left shoulder is marvelous," she said, kindly.

"But the eyes—do you like the eyes?" he demanded.

"The eyes are the windows of the soul, and Mrs. Parthington's eyes are so small," was Beatrice's answer.

Brent Thomas looked his bewilderment. He did not deal in subtleties.

"The expression, I mean?"

"Frankly, I find them lacking in expression. But that is not your fault," she added, soothingly.

Grace Parthington had been the first to draw Harmony into a flirtation after his marriage, and Beatrice had waited years to pay off the score.

Charteris frowned as Thomas bustled off in search of fresh adulation. "You know he will repeat that, *verbatim*," he said, deprecatingly.

"That suits me, perfectly. Ah, you do not know what I owe Mrs. Parthington," Beatrice answered,

carelessly. She had, perhaps, made a bitter enemy, but she cared little for that. "You may get me some tea now," she added.

While he was gone Mrs. Leigh joined her. "All alone, Bee? Have you seen the portrait? Isn't it ridiculous?"

"Scarcely that."

"Then you think it like her?"

Beatrice laughed. "She may thank her stars she does not see herself as we see her!"

Mrs. Leigh launched into another topic. "You should have been with us last night, Bee. Really, Caprice is wonderful. She looked up at our box and sang right at us. It was rather embarrassing, especially as her song was about a girl whose lover deserts her for a woman of his own rank. She hunts him out until she finds him with her rival, then she kills them both. Such an exhibition of dramatic ability deserves a better setting. I watched Mr. Charteris's face while she sang, and he looked—well, queer."

Beatrice did not display any interest. "It was probably her usual performance," she replied, listlessly.

Charteris came back with the tea. "Let me get you a cup, Mrs. Leigh," he offered, but she stopped him with a gesture of protest.

"Tea, Mr. Charteris, with my nerves! I was just telling Mrs. Harmony how much we enjoyed the performance last night. I wanted her to go with us, but I believe the suggestion of Caprice shocked her."

Charteris frowned, and Beatrice wondered and looked away.

"Scarcely that, dear Mrs. Leigh, but I confess I have been surfeited with *café-chantant* singers. For an artist like Guilbert I have the highest admiration," she said, quietly.

"Caprice is too daring," Charteris admitted—he had almost said vulgar—"and notoriety is her passport to popular favor." He felt it incumbent to say something. Silence was incriminating.

The topic was not popular. All looked bored.

"I must be getting on," Mrs. Leigh said, rising. "Can I give you a lift, Bee?"

"Thanks, I have a cab below," Beatrice replied.

Charteris drifted away, but as she was leaving she found him again at her side.

"May I put you into the carriage?" he pleaded, deferentially.

"If you will."

They went down in the elevator together and then as far as the vestibule. It was raining, and Beatrice's cab was nowhere to be seen.

"Go back in the hall and I will look it up," said Charteris, and Beatrice felt that it was pleasant to have someone take an active interest in her affairs. Insensibly she was beginning to regard him with indulgence. Harmony treated her with such scant courtesy that she had come to depend entirely upon herself.

After a few moments of waiting Charteris appeared in the doorway, holding an open umbrella over his head. "Pick up your skirts," he suggested; "it is pouring. I hope you won't get your feet wet."

He led the way quickly to the curb. The carriage door was open.

"This is not my cab," cried Beatrice, drawing back.

"I know it; I got this at the corner. It is all right, Mrs. Harmony; please get in," he urged.

She obeyed, silently, and let him wrap the robe around her feet. Then he put the umbrella in one corner.

"I do hope you won't take cold. Don't bother about the man; he will come back as soon as he drives you home." Then he slammed the door, and the horse started.

Beatrice looked around. She found herself in a private brougham, handsomely upholstered in green leather. The rack in front held a card-case, a whisk broom, a flask and a mirror, all of gun metal.

"A man's cab," surmised Beatrice. She picked up the mirror, glanced at herself first and tucked back one unruly lock of hair, then turned it over. The monogram was of gold—two

letters, curiously entwined—"P. C." She had often seen them before.

"Paul Charteris—he has sent me home in his own brougham! What would Helena Lloyd say? . . . And yet I am merely a victim of circumstance."

X

AFFAIRS were progressing entirely to Charteris's satisfaction. True, Beatrice had sent back the horseshoe the day after the ball; but he assured himself that he had expected no less of her. He had, at least, had the pleasure of seeing it glisten on her black gown.

Most women wondered why Beatrice was so partial to black, as it increased her appearance of slenderness. "It makes you look like a shadow," once declared Mrs. Ashton, frankly.

"That is all I am, the shadow of a woman," Beatrice had answered, with a whimsical little smile, and Carrie wrinkled her brows and passed on, not waiting to probe deeper and find the sadness that lay underneath Beatrice's simple statement.

The day after the studio tea Charteris dropped in at the bazar in aid of the Hospital for Crippled Children.

Society had taken up the idea of a charity bazar eagerly.

"It is quite the thing in England," said Mrs. Lloyd, enthusiastically. "I shall take charge of the flower booth, and sell nothing but American Beauties."

"In a gown of American Beauty satin, yourself a queen rose! I can see you distinctly, Helena, charging a dollar apiece for your floral maids of honor," put in Mrs. Van Alstyne, who had a keen sense of humor.

The bazar was planned, organized and carried into effect the week before Lent.

As Charteris stepped into the brilliantly decorated room he was surrounded by a bevy of young girls, who were armed with books and eagerly implored him to take chances on a pianola, an oil painting, a talking doll and a bag of golf sticks.

"Suppose I win them all?" he asked in mock dismay of the girl who was raffling the talking doll.

"No such luck, with only one chance," she retorted, saucily, whereupon he promptly took a second chance.

Mrs. Lloyd, who had taken Mrs. Van Alstyne's hint about her gown, and who was radiant with conquest, for few men could resist her roses, was the next to accost him.

"I am almost sold out," she cried, gleefully. "Come, Mr. Charteris, I have saved half a dozen of my choicest for you." This in her sweetest manner, and accompanied by an eloquent glance of her dark eyes.

"Let me have a dozen; the six choice ones could not be in better hands than yours, if you will permit me." He took them from her and handed them back with a reciprocal glance of pleasure.

She was a woman who craved admiration from all men, and to whom the devotion of one was necessary. Her second husband, who was nearly sixty, and a sufferer from gout, let her go her own way, and gave her a princely allowance, well knowing that she would do nothing to forfeit it. She had tried, unsuccessfully, to take De Lara away from Mrs. Van Alstyne, and now she turned her attention to winning Charteris from Beatrice Harmony.

"Shall I tie the others with ribbon?" she asked, archly.

"Do. How much extra?" Charteris was practical.

"Just what you want to give. Think of the poor little children who are going to be restored to health, or whose sufferings will be at least alleviated, and your generous heart will not lead you astray."

Charteris could not repress a smile as he put his hand into his pocket.

"How many wooden legs will this buy?" he asked, as he handed her five ten-dollar bills.

"You are making fun of us; but really, there is so little we ever think of doing for the poor, that in this case we ought to be commended, not ridi-

culed," she answered, with a show of offended dignity.

"Believe me, Mrs. Lloyd, I could not be guilty of making light of your charitable efforts," he said, gravely. "There is an old saying, however, that 'charity begins at home,' and I am going to put it to the test."

He had just caught sight of Frances Dunbar entering the room with her husband. Both Alec and Beatrice had insisted upon her appearance this afternoon. The girls with the chance books had seized upon Alec, and Frances stood alone, glancing hesitatingly, almost appealingly, at the unfriendly faces around her.

Mrs. Lloyd flushed under Charteris's scrutiny, but she made no movement toward her former friend.

"I have made my test, and find that it fails, as usual," said Charteris, with meaning emphasis. Then he picked up the magnificent roses, the stems of which were as long as his walking stick, and moved quickly to Frances's side.

He reached her as Beatrice came from the other end of the room. A defiant light sparkled in Beatrice's eyes, and as she saw Charteris hand his roses to Frances her heart went out to him with a throb of gratitude. She went back to her own stall and Alec was taken possession of by Alison Deyo, who, in riding habit and beaver, was presiding over a miniature racecourse, picking the winner of which entitled the lucky man to a cigar.

Charteris talked easily and offered to escort Mrs. Dunbar around. Reassured by his chivalrous manner, she began to hold up her head and greet old acquaintances with something of her former dignity.

Mrs. Leigh, who was a leading spirit in the bazar, and in charge of the bric-à-brac booth, welcomed her cordially. She had always intended to be pleasant to Frances, but in the whirl of a social season she had not been able to find time to go out of her way on her charitable errand. As she saw her now, approaching under Charteris's escort, she acknowledged

that Beatrice had not overestimated her own power.

"When did you come in?" she asked. "I heard of you establishing a record on the golf links at Westbury."

"We came up Monday," replied Frances, simply.

"Are you going to make a long stay?"

"We shall probably go back after Mr. Charteris's dinner. I am becoming quite devoted to country life."

"Come, now, Mrs. Dunbar, we can't submit to that. You must finish the season out. All of our choicest spirits are trying to desert dear old New York," put in Charteris, who really did not care whether she went to Westbury or to Africa. She was too colorless to appeal to him, and he, with others, wondered at Beatrice's championship. He did not know that Frances had been with Beatrice during her child's last illness; that, timid and shrinking as she was, she had found courage to face Harmony as he came in, decidedly the worse for liquor, and to keep him out of the nursery, where Beatrice sat watching her little girl fighting the battle between life and death.

For that hour of companionship she would have gone through fire and water to serve Frances. Her maternal instinct was the most normally developed side of Beatrice's nature; and no one guessed how much she had taken to heart the child's death.

"Will you be at the opera to-night?" asked Mrs. Leigh, affably, beginning to think it was time for her to do her share.

Frances looked pleased at the interest taken in her plans.

"Yes. Mrs. Harmony is going with us; I think we were fortunate in being able to secure a box," she answered.

"Then may I have the pleasure of seeing you afterward, for supper? I have a table reserved at Sherry's."

"Thank you; we shall be pleased to accept."

"Then it is settled. I'll see Bee myself. And, Mr. Charteris, if you are not otherwise engaged, will you join us?"

"I am afraid that is a forced invitation, Mrs. Leigh," he protested, laughingly.

"Not at all; you know I am only too glad to have you with us."

Mrs. Leigh still assumed an air of indulgence toward him.

"Then I shall be only too happy to come," he replied, gallantly, and he and Frances moved away.

"Mrs. Leigh is not half bad," he remarked, musingly.

"I have always found her charming."

Frances was enthusiastic. Everything had turned out so well.

XI

BEATRICE was selling dolls.

"Who buys them? and, what is more to the point, who gets them?" scoffed Alison Deyo; "there are no children in this generation."

"The dolls are sent to the hospitals, and babies seem to multiply under adverse conditions," Beatrice had answered, sadly. Thus her dolls were of the simplest manufacture, and appropriately clothed.

Charteris and Frances reached Beatrice's table after a leisurely ramble through the rooms.

"Dolls, dolls! Oh, how I wish I were a child again! Nothing quite equals the interest I took in my toy children," said Frances, with a note of regret in her voice.

"Not even your golf clubs, Mrs. Dunbar?" demanded Charteris, very gravely.

Frances turned to Beatrice. "Is he ever serious?"

"Never; but who is, nowadays?" Beatrice returned.

"Not Mrs. Harmony, for one," supplemented Charteris.

"If I were I should jar upon the sensitive nerves of my friends. Even this," and her comprehensive glance took in the whole bazar, "is only a farce! Who really cares for the poor little crippled children? But bazars have the stamp of fashion—all Paris went mad over one—so we gather a

lot of useless articles together, ticket them with fancy prices, don our prettiest clothes, and pretend that we are doing good. I am sick of pretense!"

Frances looked shocked at the vehemence of Beatrice's remarks; Charteris interested. What had roused her to this pitch of scorn?

"Aren't you putting it a little strong?" he asked.

"Do you think I am? Is there one of us whose charitable instinct goes below the surface?" She raised her eyes defiantly, but saw only tenderness in his gaze. "Perhaps I am wrong," she added, more gently, "but most of us are so contemptible!" Then she began busying herself with her wares.

"Someone has been annoying you," Charteris whispered, as he stooped and picked up a rag doll.

Beatrice shrugged her shoulders, as if disdaining the suggestion that anyone had the power to annoy her.

A customer approached, and her manner changed perceptibly. She became alert, interested, the ideal saleswoman.

"Won't you ask me to buy anything?" Charteris still lingered.

"Do you want a doll?"

"Yes, this one." He selected an Aunt Dinah, made of cotton, and wearing a gorgeous turban. "I will take her to preside over my household. I am sure she could fry chicken and make waffles and corn-bread. Doesn't the suggestion make you hungry?"

Beatrice laughed. "How absurd you are!" she said.

"Now, honestly," said Charteris, "I have long felt the need of a woman in my home, and as I cannot get the one I want, this dolly will have to do."

"Really, Mr. Charteris, why don't you get married?" asked Frances, a little mischievously.

Charteris looked a trifle startled for a second. He had half-forgotten the proximity of Mrs. Dunbar.

"I think myself I was cut out for domestic life. Suppose we talk it over as we go on? I fear we are taking up too much of Mrs. Harmony's time."

That night he had another opportunity of a few words alone with Beatrice, as they waited at Sherry's for the rest of the party.

She made some laughing comment, and then, changing her tone suddenly, she said: "I have not had an opportunity of telling you how pleased I was to hear that Mrs. Dunbar is to be added to your list of beauties. It was very good of you, and I am going to retract—there *is* some charity left in the world."

"I fear I cannot claim the compliment. It was the outcome of a selfish wish to please you."

"Is that selfishness?" She was smiling, and he tried to interpret her smile favorably.

"You accept it in that spirit?"

She had an inspiration. "Yes, if you will add to it. Make her the guest of honor."

"Give her your place?" he asked, incredulously.

"It would please me more than I can say," she replied, earnestly.

"Why do you go out of your way to serve her?" He was frankly curious.

Beatrice, seeing that she had won, was reckless in her triumph. "Because I am so fond of—Alec," she answered, audaciously.

Mrs. Leigh's party, which had now assembled, included Alison Deyo, Mrs. Van Alstyne, De Lara, Burton Edwards and Mr. Leigh. Jonathan Leigh, a quiet, unobtrusive little man, was as great a power in the financial world as his wife was in the social. He was twenty years her senior, but a firm friendship existed between them, and the only time that gossip had busied itself with Althea Leigh's name her husband had come to her rescue, and the slander had been killed a-borning. From that time on, while Mrs. Leigh held her court openly, no indiscretion was ever laid at her door.

Beatrice was seated between De Lara and Alec Dunbar.

She drank her cocktail and then turned to the singer, who had left his untasted. "Do you fear our American concoctions?" she asked, pleasantly.

"They mystify me. But then, everything in your country does that—American women and American drinks," he answered, in his melodious voice. He was a very handsome man, with close-curling dark hair, speaking eyes and features that were almost classic. "I fear their effect on my voice."

Beatrice raised her brows. "Why don't you add the climate to your black-list? Singers usually rail against that."

"When your eyes, madam, smile upon me, I do not need the sun of Italy."

"Very prettily said, only it should have been addressed to your other neighbor. Repeat it for her benefit; I shall not tell," she said, lightly.

"Ah, madam; I am told you have no heart."

"Really?"

"And only one passion sways you."

"Really!"

"You are ambitious."

"And I thought my position left nothing to be desired! I fear some kind friend has been telling tales about me." She was smiling sweetly, but there was irony in her eyes. "You need not tell me who," she went on; "I shall not ask you to betray confidence. After all, what does it matter what people say? Here is the champagne. Are you kinder to the imprisoned laughter of the peasant girls of France?"

"I am patriotic, madam. I pledge you."

"Pledge my ambition, rather, that I may succeed and be able to grind all my enemies under my heel." Then, with a curt nod, she turned to Alec, who was paying strict attention to his supper.

"I feel like a comic opera conspirator," she announced, confidentially; "only"—and she sighed—"I do miss the jokes."

XII

LA CAPRICE had invited Gus Ronalds to dine with her.

Afterward, over the coffee and cigarettes, he listened to her denuncia-

tion of Charteris. Then he volunteered the information she was seeking. He told her that he had seen a horseshoe, such as she described, worn at a ball recently.

"And he gave it to another woman! My horseshoe that he promised me, that I had dreamed of! Twenty diamonds, *mon cher* Gus, clear white stones, that were pure as drops of water! He has robbed me! Oh, the traitor!" she exclaimed in her rage. "Paul is mine! I will not give him up! I will fight for him! Oh, the beast; to give her my horseshoe!"

"Are you sure it was ordered for you?" Ronalds was interested. This would make a fine story to tell at the club. He had been a rival of Charteris for Caprice's favor, and she had chosen the richer of the two.

"Stupid! of course. Paul said he would order it at Buffon's. They know me there. Many diamonds have they sent me. I wanted to see for myself, so I took his card and went down. Yes, he had ordered it; and, after coaxing, I had my way and they showed me the design. It did not suit; it was not large enough; so they altered it. Twenty diamonds it was to have. And then—then he gave it to someone else! It is the handsomest horseshoe in New York. Oh, I will get even! Tell me, Gus, is she beautiful—has she eyes more velvety than mine, a prettier mouth? Ah! she could not equal my shoulders! I'll win him back—take him from her! Bring him to supper tomorrow, Gus; he'll come with you." Caprice was wheedling.

"I fear I have not enough influence with him."

"Try, Gus, for my sake. Oh, I'd like to scratch her face, the cat, to wear my diamonds!"

Ronalds laughed. He perceived that Caprice regretted the loss of the diamonds more than the loss of her lover. He had ruined himself long ago, and how he managed to keep afloat puzzled those who gave his affairs a thought. These were few, for the majority had no time to waste on social derelicts.

Charteris threw Caprice's letters aside in disgust. Whenever he thought of her, his lip stung him, and he did not care to puzzle his brains over her misspelt scrawls.

He met Burton Edwards at the club. "Have you seen Caprice lately?" he asked.

"No, I've had enough of her." Edwards had taken up Charteris's quarrel.

"I can't seem to shake her off. She wrote me again to-day."

"Conciliatory or threatening?"

"The latter, I think; but either tone would be objectionable."

"She can't make trouble, can she?"

"No. I can always buy her off; but I don't want to begin too soon; those women are leeches." Charteris lit a fresh cigarette.

Edwards gave him a quizzical glance. "I hear you were lucky at the bazar. What was it you won—a cage of monkeys?"

Charteris laughed.

"Everything but that, Burt," he said; "a pianola, a box of cigars tied with pink ribbon and an alarm clock."

"What did you do with the things?"

"Presented the pianola to Mrs. Leigh, who expressed a desire for it, I believe; sent the box of cigars to the Old Men's Home, and gave the alarm clock to Watkins, with orders to call me after this at a reasonable hour. You should have seen his face; it was a study!"

"And wasn't there a French doll?"

"None of my acquaintances has a little girl of a suitable age for dolls, so I gave it to Mrs. Harmony to dispose of."

"Is that all she got? Charteris, you're a fraud!" chaffed Edwards.

"Nothing of the sort!" protested his friend.

"I hear Harmony is in a pretty bad way. He lost heavily in that Sugar deal yesterday," began Edwards, seriously.

Charteris was interested.

"I lost a few thousands myself in the sweet stuff," he said.

"A few thousands? Why, Harmony's losses were over fifty."

Charteris whistled. "Will he recover?"

"That is what everyone is asking. They've been scraping along on next to nothing for years, and Harmony stood to win his pile, when things went against him. If he'd only had your luck, Charteris! On my soul, I feel sorry for the poor beggar! He's been drinking hard of late, and his wife doesn't care what becomes of him."

"She's a darned sight too good for him!" muttered Charteris, hotly.

"Of course; but they are mismatched."

"Most couples are. I wonder if I could be of any assistance?"

"She is too proud for that."

"She would not know. You see Harmony—that's a good fellow, Burt—and tell him we have a lot of money lying idle that we should be glad to have him make use of."

Edwards was Charteris's confidential man, and entrusted with the management of his enormous business interests.

"You mean to put Harmony on his feet?" Edwards had not understood that the offer of help was to be made to the husband, and not to the wife.

"If he will let us. Can you see him to-day, Burt?"

"Paul, you're a wonder!" and Edwards looked his admiration. Assistance to the tune of sixty or seventy thousand dollars was a rare piece of generosity, even though the multi-millionaire would not miss such a sum.

Charteris made a gesture of remonstrance and took his way to the billiard-room.

Gus Ronalds was there.

"Shall we try a game?" asked Charteris, affably.

"Begad, you're a dare-devil to challenge me," returned Ronalds, as he picked up a cue with mock condescension and began to chalk the end. "By the way," he continued, with an assumption of ease he was far from feeling, "let me give you a tip, Charteris. Caprice means mischief. She claims that you gave

some diamonds promised to her to another woman, and she is on the war-path."

Charteris looked grave. He feared that Caprice would make a scene if she got the opportunity.

"How does she make that out?"

Ronalds leaned over to make a difficult shot before he answered. "It seems that she persuaded the jeweler to change the design—used your card as a guarantee, you know. She's clever, eh? And now she has heard that one of your set is wearing a horse-shoe like the one she selected."

"Horseshoes are very common."

"Yes, but not of that size; it is the largest Buffon ever got up."

He watched Charteris closely, and saw that he was perturbed. "I say, why don't you see Caprice? A little talk may smooth matters over," he suggested.

"I'll be d—d if I will," exclaimed Charteris, savagely, "and if she means mischief I'll take good care she doesn't get the chance to do any damage. You might tell her that from me. Perhaps then she will realize that I am in earnest."

Ronalds stopped to chalk his cue again.

"Too bad about Harmony, isn't it? Some fellows have no end of bad luck." He wondered whether Charteris would profit by Harmony's misfortune.

"He may get up again," observed Charteris, carelessly.

"I am afraid he is a goner this time. You don't do much in the Street yourself, do you, Charteris?"

"No, but I was caught in Sugar yesterday," he admitted.

"Nasty uncertain thing, the stock market!" said Ronalds, with a tightening of the lips.

"Perhaps, but it furnishes a little excitement now and then when there's nothing doing."

At that moment Burton Edwards appeared in the doorway.

"Charteris, I have just heard over the telephone that Harmony has failed for a hundred thousand!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

Charteris continued his game with apparent unconcern. "Well, you were right, Ronalds; he has gone under. Poor devil! Go on, it is your play," he added.

XIII

MEANWHILE, no rumor of impending disaster had reached Beatrice's ears. She had not seen Harmony for two days. He had come in each night after she had retired, and had left the house in the morning before she had awakened.

On the day of the failure she had risen later than usual, and after her breakfast had gone to the dressmaker's. She was having a new gown made for Paul Charteris's dinner.

As she left the fitting-room Mrs. Leigh came in.

"Are you in a hurry, Bee? If not, wait a few moments, and I will drive you home," she said, cordially.

Her husband had told her that morning that nothing short of a miracle could save Harry Harmony, and her heart went out to Beatrice. That Beatrice knew nothing was evident at the first glance, and Mrs. Leigh was inspired to help the brave woman who had been fighting against such heavy odds for so long.

"Thank you, but I enjoy walking, and it is only a step up the Avenue," Beatrice returned. She hated anything that savored of patronage.

"As you choose. I will see you to-night. Do not let anything keep you away."

"Indeed I won't. Good-bye," and Beatrice passed on through the hall and out into the street.

"Mr. Harmony came in a little while ago and asked for Madame," Marie said, as she opened the door.

Beatrice had an intuition of bad news. "Where is he?" she asked.

"In his room, Madame."

Beatrice stripped off her jacket hurriedly and unpinning her hat; she smoothed her hair unconsciously, and then crossed the hall and knocked at her husband's door. There was no answer. She turned the knob and

went in quietly. Harmony was sitting at his desk, his head resting, face downward, on his outstretched arms. Beatrice drew near and paused beside him.

"Harry, Harry, what is it?" Her slender hand crept from his shoulder to his rough brown head.

He groaned, but did not look up.

"What is it, Harry? Don't keep me in suspense. Is it very bad?" She forced herself to speak calmly.

Then he raised his head. His dark eyes burned sombrely in his white face; he had grown haggard over night. A premonition of the truth came to Beatrice. "Are we ruined, Harry?" she whispered.

He groaned again. "Worse, worse; irretrievably ruined, dishonored, disgraced!"

Beatrice dropped on her knees beside him and put up her arms. "Is it as bad as that, Harry? Can nothing be done?" she asked.

His face worked convulsively. "I fought off ruin until I thought I had won. If I had been successful, Bee, my mind was made up to get out of it entirely. I stood to win a million."

"And you lost?"

"A hundred thousand."

"Harry!"

"Don't reproach me—I can't stand it! I've ruined you, but your uncle won't let you suffer. He'll look out for you. Oh, Bee, if we'd only had that boy!" he wailed, with all a weak man's protest against fate.

"It doesn't do any good to recall that possibility now, and I am not reproaching you; but I don't understand. How could you lose a hundred thousand when you never had as much as that?" she asked, frankly.

"That is a peculiarity of the stock market—that is what ruins so many of us; gambling with amounts we never possessed!"

Beatrice thought his keenness of insight came rather late, but she said nothing. She drew his head down to her shoulder; she had not shown him such tenderness in years, and now it was more to a suffering human being than to her husband.

"I've thought it all out, Bee, and I'm going away. A steamer sails for Brazil to-morrow. Perhaps I can make my way there. I can speak Spanish, and there is always a chance for Americans in those Southern countries. I may be able to retrieve in time," he said.

Beatrice listened incredulously. "And what is to become of me?" she asked.

"Oh, your uncle will give you a home!" he replied, as if he had settled that question to his own satisfaction. "Now, don't throw a wet blanket over my plans! Yesterday, when I knew that it was coming, I was tempted to blow out my brains. Then I thought of the child, and, somehow, she stayed my hand. I couldn't leave you alone to face such a muddle."

"Harry, if you go to Brazil, take me with you!"

"You are crazy—you don't know what you say. I may go into the interior, and a man is always hampered by a woman clinging to him," he retorted, irritably.

"So you want to cut yourself adrift?"

"Temporarily."

Beatrice rose abruptly. Her head ached with conflicting emotions, but one thing stood out clearly; she must not separate herself from her husband. That way lay moral disaster. "Harry, you are deserting me!"

He faced her angrily. "Had I intended desertion, would I have come home to-day? I leave you in your uncle's care."

"Whether he wishes to take me in or not?"

"You are tantalizing. What sort of a life would you lead in Brazil, away from the society in which you are so bound up—away from all your friends?" He was afraid he was going to have trouble with her. He now wished he had gone off secretly, as he had at first intended.

"My friends?" Beatrice gave a short laugh. "Who are my friends? Which one of them would remember my existence after a month's absence? Frances Dunbar would miss me, but

that is because she has need of me!"

Harmony seized his opportunity. "If you lack friends, Bee, you have only yourself to blame. Your tongue is too sharp. You should put a curb on it," he said, patronizingly.

Beatrice bit her lip.

"That unfortunate member has been the subject of many a reproof," she began, bitterly. Then her tone changed, as she added: "Harry, is it quite fair to leave me behind?—to subject me to the temptations that beset a woman deprived of her husband's protection?"

"See here, Bee, you know what I think about that. A woman is good, or she is bad. Circumstances have nothing to do with it, and virtue that won't stand the test is pretty poor stuff."

"Women are not to be divided into two classes like that. Good women have a streak of the devil in them, and bad women a quality of the angels; we are so mixed that too often we are merely creatures of favorable or unfavorable conditions." Beatrice spoke reflectively. She was thinking about her own case. Separated from Harry, would she ever yield to love's allurements?

Silence ensued, broken by a knock at the door.

"Someone at the telephone, asking for Mr. Harmony," announced Marie.

Harry went quickly to answer it, leaving Beatrice standing beside the mantelpiece. Relieved of her husband's presence, she gave full reign to her bitter thoughts. He would leave the country, escape his creditors, run away from the consequences of his mad folly; and she was to stay, to face ruin, disgrace, dishonor; make herself a pensioner on her uncle's bounty; learn to cringe to his wife, who had always been jealous of her—she, who had been so independent, who had carried her head so high! She thought of the meaning glances, the mocking words of sympathy from the lips of those she had flouted, the condescending patronage of Althea Leigh and even Frances Dunbar, the triumphant

sneers of Helena Lloyd. How could she face her world if Harmony left her?

It was too much to expect of her. It was too much! She had been a good wife to him, and if she had failed in her duty, it was because he had wearied quickly of home life and domestic ties. Her education had not taught her to be strong, but a naturally firm character had partially supplied the deficiencies of early training. She had the making of a noble woman in her, but, as yet, the depths of her nature had not been sounded. Her life had been played out in the shallows, and whether she would ever reach to the fulness of her womanhood remained to be seen. It was a perilous turning point in her career. Vaguely she understood her danger, and trembled before it.

XIV

"A MAN wants to see me at the club on business." The expression of Harmony's face was brighter.

"Is it good news, Harry?" Beatrice asked, catching the infection of hope from his voice.

He laughed mirthlessly.

"Perhaps; who knows? Good-bye, Bee. Keep your courage up, and if it's good news, I'll let you know."

"Don't forget, Harry; I shall wait at home until I hear from you. I wish you luck," she said, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

"Thanks," and he went out with a certain jauntiness.

Beatrice's heart gave a throb of thankfulness. Surely he must have some substantial offer of aid in view to raise his spirits in that fashion, and perhaps in an hour she would be able to smile at her recent terror.

She busied herself about his room, putting things to rights with a woman's sense of orderliness, and resolutely shutting out of her mind thoughts of what liberty might mean.

She had been true to him, in her own mocking fashion, and though she knew he had not been equally loyal to

her, she excused his lapses with contemptuous pity.

"Men are differently constituted from women," she reasoned, "and why should I blame him for following the dictates of his nature? I was born faithful to an idea; but if I ever really loved, perhaps I would be just as weak as others. Consequently there is nothing to praise in my attitude."

She examined the photographs on his table carelessly. Mostly of actresses, and mostly autographed, though she discovered two of Grace Parthington inscribed with old dates, one of Carrie Ashton, and one of Angela Bryce.

She picked up the latter and studied its features. Large and dark eyes, a short, rather broad nose, a full, sensuous mouth, and a weak chin. The soft oval of the face was framed in masses of dark hair rippling down over her bare shoulders.

So this was Harmony's latest inamorata.

People said the girl was mad about him. Poor girl! He was handsome enough to attract women who had not the acumen to penetrate the superficial, but Beatrice felt, nothing but pity for his new victim.

Marie announced lunch, and then Beatrice realized that her husband had been gone over an hour, and no word had come from him.

"I won't go out this afternoon, Marie. You can light a fire in my room, and bring me up some tea about five o'clock," she said, as she rose from the table.

Settling herself comfortably with a book in front of the blazing logs, she did not notice how the time passed.

A French clock on the mantel chimed the hour—five. Beatrice looked up with a start. Surely Harry must know something by this time! Could he have forgotten his promise? He must understand her anxiety, and it was cruel of him to keep her in suspense.

Marie brought up the tea, but Beatrice could not drink it. She made half-a-dozen trips to the hall, thinking she heard the telephone. She

picked up her book impatiently, but the spell was broken and she read in a desultory fashion, glancing every few minutes at the clock.

Another hour passed. Beatrice grew nervous.

She began pacing up and down the room, her anger rapidly increasing. After a while she grew calmer. It was like Harry to ignore her feelings in this fashion, and she reseated herself in front of the fire and speculated upon the future.

Her childhood had been saddened by the harsh treatment of an overbearing governess. Later on she had been sent to boarding-school to be out of her father's way. He was a widower, a typical old beau, who dyed his hair, padded his coats and paid court to every rich woman that crossed his path. Left to the care of servants, Beatrice's eyes were early opened to the sordid side of life, and she learned to undervalue the few friendships that were offered her. Her father, who had a modest income, begrudged every penny of it spent on her education, and she would have fared badly had not her uncle on her mother's side come to her rescue. He defrayed her expenses, and saw that she was properly launched in the social world.

"She is pretty and comes of good stock. It ought not to be difficult to marry her off," said her father; and Beatrice was made to understand that the prime object of a girl's life was to marry well.

She was nineteen when she met, and, after three months' acquaintance, married Harry Harmony. Her father had thought it would sound well to circulate the rumor that she was her uncle's heiress. Harry Harmony, one of the fastest men in his set, heard the rumor, saw that the girl was pretty, and laid his plans accordingly.

When, a year after their marriage, her uncle announced his own matrimonial plans, Harmony swore that he had been duped.

Beatrice, learning for the first time of her father's rascality and her husband's calculations, was overwhelmed

with shame. She longed to hide herself from the critical eyes of her associates. Then her pride awoke.

If she were poor, at least she came of an old family, and position was due her. To Harmony's amazement, she became a leader—one whose adverse opinion was dreaded and whose favor it was thought advisable to win.

No breath of scandal sullied her name; she was thought to be all ambition, and lacking in those subtler feelings that too often prove the ruin of her sex.

For eight years she had made a good fight, but now it was over, unless some friend of Harry should offer substantial help. And Beatrice dared not count on this; it was too visionary.

What did the future hold for her? She shivered as she thought of it. It was so barren of hope.

She had intended going to the opera, and afterward to a dance. She remembered now that Mrs. Leigh had begged her not to let anything keep her away. There was a significance to her friend's words and manner that had escaped her then, and she had answered carelessly. Mrs. Leigh must have known of their difficulties while she was still in ignorance.

She was in no humor for Eames as *Juliette*, nor for the cotillion afterward at Mrs. Lloyd's; she would stay at home and meet Harry when he came in. It would be late, but then she must expect that.

Men were all alike, all selfish. So she concluded from her experience, and she could only judge them as she had found them.

XV

IT was after midnight when Harmony came home.

As he fitted his latch key in the lock Beatrice flew down the stairs. She had wrought herself up to a nervous pitch bordering on hysteria.

Harmony came in unsteadily, his hat on the back of his head. He looked up and caught sight of Beatrice's white face.

"That's all right, my dear, that's

all right," he said, with a vacuous smile.

He had been drinking, and Beatrice shrank despairingly against the balustrade.

"Waiting up for me? That's a good little wife, a most devoted wife. Give any man the deuce, I will, who says you're not a devoted wife."

Beatrice turned wearily and mounted the stairs again. Her husband followed. At the door of his room she paused.

"I waited all day, thinking you might send me a message, Harry," she said, reproachfully.

"Couldn't, my dear; didn't have the time; most awfully busy," he replied, nodding his head to her.

"Are you coming out all right?"

She could not refrain from asking this.

"Of course. Most extraordinary thing. I never knew before what a good chap he is—a thorough gentleman, that's what I say."

"Who, Harry?"

Harmony gave a cunning leer.

"Can't tell. He said, 'Harry, my boy, women are sly dogs'—no, I said 'women are sly dogs,' and he said—what the devil was it he said?"

Beatrice's heart sank.

"He said: 'Never, never tell a woman a secret—woman is so naturally generous she can't keep anything, not even a secret.' And I won't tell. He's my benefactor, the only one who came to my assistance when I was hard pressed. He said: 'Harmony, keep this from your wife; women don't understand business, and they ask so many questions. This is purely a business transaction between gentlemen.'"

His attempt at dignity would have been ludicrous at any other time, but at present it struck horror to Beatrice's heart. There was no need to ask more; she knew. It goaded her to desperation to hear that her husband had accepted help from—*him*.

"So it is Paul Charteris," she said, finally.

A look of blank amazement swept over Harmony's sodden features.

"You are mistaken, my dear—on the wrong track altogether." Then, with a sudden anger: "You can't trap *me*! I never mentioned his name!"

"Go to bed, Harry. We can talk this thing over in the morning. Good-night."

But Harmony made one final effort.

"Bee, you're wrong; it's not Charteris. Remember, I said it's not Charteris."

There was no sleep for Beatrice that night.

Slowly Charteris's web was closing round her. He had stood by her side as Frances's champion, he had given way to her in the matter of his dinner, and now he was the means of rescuing her husband from worse than bankruptcy; and he had done these things for her.

He had not asked for reward, but he would ask; and she, who had accepted his help, would be expected to grant it.

Was there no escape? Surely, he could not be relentless. He asked for love, and she had none to give. He would not take gratitude in payment—her experience of men gave her no such shred of comfort.

One avenue was still open to her. She could appeal to her uncle. He could right Harmony if he would; and that was the only way out of the tangle.

It was barely nine o'clock the next morning when Beatrice rang the bell of her uncle's house.

The family was at breakfast, and as she entered the dining-room a pretty domestic scene met her eyes.

Mrs. Leslie, fully thirty years her husband's junior, was inclined to be jealous of Beatrice. She envied the younger woman her social position, and she had done what she could to harden the uncle's heart against the niece. She made a charming picture, however, in her becoming morning gown, seated behind the coffee urn and attending to the wants of the twins—sturdy little fellows just promoted to the dignity of trousers.

William Leslie looked up over his glasses at Beatrice.

"Bless my soul! Beatrice, at this hour!" he cried, rising and welcoming her in his hearty fashion. He had always been fond of his favorite sister's child, and her marriage had been a great disappointment to him.

Anne Leslie also came forward, kissed Beatrice, and insisted upon her taking a cup of coffee.

She could not talk business before Anne and the children, so she discussed the opera, Mrs. Leigh's dinners, Carrie Ashton's fancy dress ball and the rest of the social events, about which Anne Leslie liked to hear. Finally Mr. Leslie pushed back his chair and met her appealing gaze.

"Do you want to see me particularly, my dear?" he asked, kindly; "for I can scarcely believe you are making calls at this hour."

"Can you spare a few minutes, uncle?"

She followed him to the library, but when the door had been closed against intruders her courage gave way, and she sat staring absently at the pattern of the rug.

"I suppose you have come about that wretched failure of Harry's," began her uncle, gravely.

Harry's wife raised her eyes piteously to his.

"Yes," and she sighed softly.

"Well, I am sorry for you, Beatrice, but I never took much stock in your husband, and I am not surprised at his ending. I helped him once before, for your sake; but I won't do anything more for him," he began, firmly. "I'll make you an allowance on which you can live comfortably, but I refuse to throw good money after bad."

"It's not all Harry's fault. My father let it be very well understood that I was to inherit from you," Beatrice objected.

"Your father was a scoundrel! I beg your pardon, Beatrice!"

"I am not defending my father."

"He broke his wife's heart; and though he held on to her money, he refused to spend any of it on you."

"Knowing that my good uncle would see that I would not come to

want." She smiled gratefully at him.

"Neither then nor now. Here's my offer, Bee! I'll give you five thousand a year, and if you're wise you won't let your precious husband know the amount." He held out his hand to her kindly.

"You are very good, Uncle Will, but I am here to plead for Harry. You must listen to me. Yesterday a man offered to settle his deficiencies." Beatrice spoke with apparent effort.

"Bless my soul! I did not know a man in the world had so much love for Harry Harmony!" Leslie was genuinely astonished.

"Ah! that is it! It's not for Harry he is doing this; it is for Harry's wife," came the bitter answer.

"Beatrice, how do you know?"

"A woman knows these things by instinct, but in this case it is pure reason. This man scarcely knows Harry. They belong to the same clubs and meet occasionally, that is all; but he has been very nice to me. Suddenly he displays the most disinterested friendship for my husband—gives him a hundred thousand dollars. Isn't it for the purpose of putting me under obligations and tying Harry's hands?" She spoke sadly, as if she had lost hope of avoiding the threatened evil.

"Your husband is a coward!" and Leslie brought his clenched hand down on the table.

"Uncle, he does not know, and I cannot tell him. Harry is hot-tempered, and he would be sure to make a fuss, and my name would suffer," she said, simply.

"The man is a scoundrel!" Leslie went on, vehemently.

Beatrice paled slightly.

"The other man, perhaps. He seeks to buy me. Well, after all, most men look for some material advantage in their dealings with women; and money is a potent factor. I am shocking you by speaking so openly, but I have no one to plead for me, and I must make plain to you the danger of your sister's child," she explained,

trying to subdue the tremor in her voice.

"And you want me to take this man's place, to throw away a hundred thousand dollars?"

"You might lose that in speculation."

"But here there is no risk—it is a certainty."

"I know it, but will you do this for me?"

Leslie dropped his head on his hand and thought deeply.

"Perhaps Harmony won't like my offer as well as the other. But I might as well tell you, Bee, that I have been thinking of your affairs for some time," he said, finally. "Now, I'll settle with Harry's creditors and provide an opening for him in Mexico. I have some silver mines there that need attention; he can go down and look them over. It will take about a year, and if they turn out well it will put money in his pocket; if not, I'll find him another opening. Will that do?"

Beatrice choked back a sob.

"Can I go with him?" she asked.

Leslie smiled affectionately at her.

"Are you really fond of that young scamp, Beatrice?" he demanded, indulgently. "I should say the climate wouldn't agree with you—you are too delicate; but you and Harry can settle that between you. If you decide to remain here, my heart and my house are open to you, little woman."

Beatrice could not speak, but she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

Surprised at this unusual demonstration, he patted her cheek softly.

"There, there, my dear, don't take on so," for Beatrice was crying. "Whom should you go to for help if not to your crusty old uncle?"

XVI

HARMONY, however, flatly refused to consider the second offer. He had just come down to breakfast when his wife returned, and he was in a bad humor.

The effect of his over-indulgence in liquor usually resulted in a violent headache the next morning.

"Hang your officiousness, Bee! A man can manage his own affairs best, and I won't be under obligations to your uncle," he said, irritably.

"You prefer to accept help from a stranger, a man who snubbed you last year?"

Harmony made no reply.

"Oh, I know all about it," she continued. "Such things are talked about, you know. Paul Charteris deliberately struck your name off the list of the reception committee at the club reception to the President, remarking that they did not want men to receive the President of the United States who would be under the table before the evening was over; and now, because he offers to help you, you cringe to him." Her voice vibrated with scorn.

Harmony turned white to the lips. "Beatrice, I have never raised my hand to a woman, but some day you will go too far," he said, controlling himself with difficulty.

Beatrice grew penitent. "I am sorry I spoke roughly, Harry, but I am almost beside myself." She tried another tack. "Don't you realize what people will say when they know who has come to your rescue?"

"No, and I don't care. Besides, who can know of it? I am not making my affairs public," he answered, sullenly.

"Those things always come out. It would be more natural to accept Uncle Will's offer. They say Mexico is a great field for Americans; and Uncle Will thinks you stand a chance of making money." She tried to wheedle him, but he remained suspicious.

"If the mines were worth anything he'd have seen to them long ago."

"How suspicious you are! Can't you understand he is doing this unselfishly—out of love for me?"

"And Charteris's offer is made out of friendship for me."

"Ah, if it only were!"

"How do you know so much about it?" he demanded, sharply.

She drew off her gloves slowly as she replied. "By taking a leaf out of your own book, and discrediting what may appear to be a disinterested action."

"Beatrice, you are enough to drive a fellow to drink! If you've anything against Charteris, out with it; if he's ever insulted you, say so; but don't sit there insinuating things!" he cried.

This was her opportunity, but she let it pass. She could not tell Harmony as she had told her uncle; he would take it differently; he would declare that she imagined things, and she could give him no proof. So she kept silent, while despair gradually numbed her senses.

After a while she spoke again. "So you refuse Uncle Will's offer?"

"Yes."

"Wait a day and think it over. Mr. Charteris may repent in the morning all the fine promises he made over a bottle of wine. Don't throw away one chance before you are sure of the other." Then she left him.

If Harmony were not to be persuaded, there still remained Charteris himself; and the resolve to try her influence with him came to her suddenly.

It was only half after ten, and she went up to her room to make a few changes in her costume. Substituting a toque for her walking-hat, and tying on a chiffon veil, which she could drop over her face, she gave some final instructions to Marie and again left the house. She walked a few blocks before hailing a cab. To the driver she gave Charteris's address.

She dared not stop to speculate on the consequences of her rash act, but for once in her life gave rein to pure impulse.

Paying the man, and dismissing him at the door, she walked quickly into the vestibule. "Mr. Charteris," she said, going toward the elevator.

The boy gave her a searching

glance. She was the second woman to ask for Charteris that morning, and the other was still upstairs. This one, however, was a lady, he decided, and he took her up unquestioningly.

As Beatrice stepped to the door and nervously raised the brass knocker, a figure glided out of the twilight of the hallway.

The door opened.

"Mr. Charteris," murmured Beatrice, in an almost inarticulate whisper.

"Your name, madam," Watkins demanded, politely, but without moving. This might be an emissary of La Caprice, and he had just got rid of the fiery Frenchwoman.

Beatrice was silent; she could not give her name.

"I think Mr. Charteris will see me," she said, quietly.

At that moment Caprice, who, after being refused admittance, had lingered in the hall, waiting to waylay Charteris as he came out, emerged from the shadow.

If she were shut out, she would at least see the woman who was admitted. Doubtless that woman was the recipient of the diamond horse-shoe.

Beatrice's veil shrouded her features.

Watkins, at sight of Caprice, lost all caution. "Come in, madam; come in quickly," he cried; but Caprice was ahead of him.

"If I cannot enter, neither can she!" she cried. "Why don't you show your face, if you're not ashamed of it?"

With a cat-like spring she got between Beatrice and the half-open door. Beatrice drew back in terror.

Caprice took in rapidly the slight, elegant figure, the proud poise of the head, the slender, gloved hands, but the face defied her scrutiny.

Horror at the vulgarity of the scene gave Beatrice rude strength.

"Paul!" she cried, as, pushing Caprice out of her way, she flew down the inner hall.

Charteris, hearing the noise, had come out of his smoking-room in time

to hear Caprice's insulting exclamation, and paused in astonishment on the threshold.

At the cry of his name, he started forward to protect the woman he loved.

"Go in here, while I get rid of her," he whispered, pushing her into the room and closing the door to prevent Caprice from following. After a short, angry conflict, he came out victor, and Caprice left, vanquished.

"Now see that she does not hang around the house. If she lingers, call a policeman. I refuse to be annoyed any longer," he said to Watkins, and Caprice, hearing him, as he intended she should, went away baffled.

Charteris's heart beat high with hope of happiness. She had come to him of her own accord; she had called him by name. Was his dream coming true?

XVII

As he opened the door, Beatrice started from the chair in which she had been shrinking.

"Bee, Bee!" he breathed, all his love for her surging up to his lips.

Then he bent beside her and tried to take her hand.

She had removed her veil, and her hair was loosened in charming disorder. Her eyes blazed with excitement, and her mouth trembled; she put out both hands to keep him off, but he imprisoned them gently in his own.

In the weakness following her agitation Beatrice felt almost incapable of resistance. She was so wholly in his power; and she had come of her own free will.

Her involuntary use of his name had startled her as much as it had him. Could it be that her heart was beginning to respond, at last?

She smiled faintly at the thought, and he, seeing the smile, felt emboldened. He raised her hands to his lips, and held them there. Then her inaction passed.

She laughed, a little laugh that had

no mirth in it and that struck a chill to his heart.

"Mr. Charteris, you will be generous, I know, and you will not misinterpret my visit," she began, withdrawing her hands from his clasp. He made no effort to retain them; he realized that she was slipping away from him, again. "It seems as if I were always asking favors of you, but none has equaled the one I have come to ask now. I am almost afraid to put it into words." She reseated herself, and tried to beam at him with her old-time friendliness.

He stood leaning against the bookcase, looking down at her, his arms folded, his face pale.

"Have I ever refused you anything, Mrs. Harmony? In fact, it is my pleasure to serve you."

Beatrice shivered at the calmness of his tones; she understood the effort he was making.

"You give me courage. It is this: I want you to withdraw the offer you made to my husband yesterday."

Charteris started. Harmony had promised faithfully to keep this matter from his wife.

"An offer I made to your husband, yesterday?" he repeated, slowly.

"Ah, don't deny it. Mr. Harmony did not betray you. I guessed it. You were the only man rich enough to aid him—who would aid him in such a fashion; but we cannot accept."

"I assure you, Mrs. Harmony, you are distressing yourself needlessly."

"Will you deny, upon your honor, that you are Mr. Harmony's benefactor?"

Charteris flushed uncomfortably.

"You make too much of it; it is a business affair," he said, diffidently.

"And if he had not been my husband, you would have acted with the same friendliness toward him?"

"Certainly."

A humorous twinkle came into Beatrice's eyes. "Really," she objected, "you make it appear as if I were inordinately vain. Frankly, then, I appeal to your generosity. My uncle is willing to help us, but he imposes a condition: Mr. Har-

mony must personally superintend the working of some mines in Mexico. Your offer was a free gift, and my husband does not know there is a reason for his rejecting it. Ah, do not protest—do not make it more difficult for me! There is only one thing left—will you withdraw your offer? Say that you've heard of Mr. Leslie's proposition, and, under the circumstances, you recognize his prior right."

"It would be scarcely honorable for me to draw back now."

"It would be less honorable for you to proceed. See how great my trust is in you! I come to you confident that I will accomplish my mission. Women rarely court defeat. Had I doubted, I would have sent for you; feeling sure, I came to you." Beatrice's voice was very winning.

"Bee, you tempt me. And if I give way, what then?" His voice was low with passion.

"Nothing," Beatrice answered, with downcast eyes.

He made a despairing gesture.

"Nothing?"

"Yes, I must not lead you on with false hopes. If I were to be won, your devotion might have touched me; but I am not in the race. If you do this thing it will please me, but I cannot bribe you."

Charteris began to pace the room with quick strides. "Why are you different from other women? I feel that difference, but I cannot explain it. Can you? Are you really as heartless as you claim to be? Is that the secret of your charm—the sense that you are not for any man's winning? Beatrice, I love you, love you as I never knew I could love any woman. You are here in my rooms, you came willingly, and you trust to my honor. Don't you know what a frail thing that is in a case like this? I could take you in my arms and crush your life out in my embrace! But I will not even touch your hand, and you know it, so great is your power over me. Witch—woman—what are you?" he cried, vehemently, as he paused in front of her and stared at her with eyes full of longing.

"Not the former, I hope, only the latter, with the mystery of her sex hovering over her. I have been here quite half an hour; will you let your man call a cab for me?" She rose, and stood facing him, with all the composure of a woman of the world. Her dread of an embarrassing scene had vanished; she had triumphed! Ardor had entered the lists against honor and the dignity of womanhood, and had been vanquished.

Charteris was still pale from his recent conflict of emotions; but he realized that his better nature had risen to dominate him, and he was nearer to the understanding of love than he had ever been in his life before. A consciousness of his power for good dawned upon him—of the recompense of self-sacrifice, of silence. Something within him changed, as if his heart had been touched by a magic wand. Beatrice, divining his struggle and his victory, felt a pang of unutterable regret. Oh, if she were but free to take this love, to wear it as a crown!—what possibilities of happiness the very thought unfolded!

In silence he accompanied her to the door.

"No further, please," she said, as they stood in the hall together. "I may count on you?"

"Always," he answered; then he rang for the elevator.

She held out her hand, and he took it, courteously.

Then she was gone, and the sense of his loss came over him with overwhelming suddenness.

His dream was over—over; but the fragrance of it would cling to him as long as he lived.

XVIII

WHEN she was safe at home again Beatrice wondered at her boldness in going to him. It was unlike her to ignore conventionality. It would have been much simpler to have sent for him. In her home she would have been at a greater advantage.

Yet it had pleased her for once to throw aside discretion, to trust to her

indifference to protect her; even to place herself at the mercy of the man of whom she wished to ask a great favor. And now that she had come out of it scathless she was glad that she had gone—glad that she had proved to herself that one man could rise superior to opportunity for self-triumph and be worthy of the trust reposed in him.

The look in his eyes had told her enough; the break in his voice had testified to the conflict required to retain his self-control.

And, thinking it over, Beatrice exulted in the victory she had won over herself. Something akin to love stirred in her breast, but even as she softened, the image of Caprice, a mad fury, rose up before her.

"One of the women he has loved and tired of. After all, he is a man, and how long would his love for me endure?" she mused, and then she sighed and trampled ruthlessly upon the bud that with care might have burst into bloom.

The next two days were busy ones for Beatrice.

Harmony came home in a furious temper.

"Charteris is a cad!" he announced. "Lucky for him the affair is one I cannot make public."

Beatrice knit her brows anxiously. She hoped no rumor of the affair would get abroad to hurt Charteris.

For her uncle's offer, Harmony was barely grateful.

He preferred to stay in New York. Mexico was a hole, and the silver mines did not amount to a row of pins; he had been making inquiries.

As to Beatrice's desire to accompany him, he laughed at it.

"It will be bad enough for me alone, but it would be simply impossible to tote you around. So put that idea out of your wifely head. Why you display so much solicitude for my welfare I can't guess. But don't flatter yourself I think it is to be with me you make your offer."

She was hurt by his coarseness.

"Very well, then, we shall say no more about it. For my part, I think

Uncle Will has treated you generously; and you do not deserve it at his hands," she said, finally.

The next morning Frances came in. It was the day of Charteris's dinner, and Beatrice was nervous; so she greeted Frances with more than her usual warmth.

"My dear, ever since I heard of your misfortune I have been trying to get up; but between the dress-maker and my neuralgia I have been almost crazy," Frances began, apologetically.

Beatrice looked at her curiously. Frances's manner was more assured; her voice had lost that plaintive tone which was almost a whine; and, as she realized that she was to take her old place in the world, her eyes had lost their look of timid appeal.

"Why should you have put yourself out, dear? I am in no need of sympathy. Harry has failed, but what of it? That is no tragedy."

Frances wished Beatrice wouldn't smile in that horrid fashion.

"How queerly you take it! If Alec lost his money I should break my heart grieving for him," she said, with an injured air.

She had come prepared to be sympathetic, and it annoyed her to find Beatrice in no mood for the tactful ministrations of a friend.

"Alec—ah, that is different! If I had done as much for Harry as you did for Alec, I might feel his losses; but, you see, we are very prosaic; in fact, I think I rather bore Harry, and I know he bores me; and then I always have my uncle to fall back on. Harry is going to Mexico, and I shall probably go abroad with Mrs. Leslie and the twins," Beatrice went on, continuing to tear up the old letters and papers which she was engaged in destroying.

"Bee, you are angry with me!" began Frances, all her assurance vanishing.

"Angry with you? What put such an absurd idea into your head?" laughed Beatrice.

"Won't you stay with us while Harry is in Mexico?"

"Why should I? You don't need me any longer, Francie. You have conquered. To-night you will triumph. You will prove again that money can work miracles. Alec's money and Paul Charteris's. Perhaps I should be a clog on your wheel now."

"Bee, you are very unkind! Don't you believe that I love you—that I want you with me for another reason besides the re-establishment of my social position? I have been fond of you ever since we were children. I looked up to you and admired you even then; you were so clever! And you seemed to like me in those days, Bee. Sometimes I believe you still care, but you distrust people, and you hate to display your feelings." Frances spoke regretfully, and Beatrice softened.

"Like you, Francie? Of course I do, and I am interested in all that concerns you. It is my unfortunate disposition that prevents me from showing my friendship more openly," she said, indulgently.

"Oh, you have given proof of your friendship, Bee. Where would I be now if you had not come to my assistance?"

"I could do so little. My poverty tied my hands. You have Mr. Charteris to thank for the real victory."

"But who put it into Mr. Charteris's head to take up our cause? I can guess. By the way, Bee, show me the horseshoe you wore at Mrs. Parthington's dance. Several have spoken of it; they say it is superb! Who gave it to you—your uncle?" Frances was all interest.

Beatrice frowned. She threw the scraps she had collected into the fire before she answered. "I must confess to a fault. The horseshoe was not mine; it was sent to me by mistake, and though I returned it the next day I could not resist the temptation of wearing it that night," she explained, calmly.

"Suppose you had lost it, Bee!" cried Frances. "To whom does it belong?"

"It would not be fair to tell, dear."

Frances left soon after. She was going to lunch with Carrie Ashton.

As she entered the drawing-room she heard Mrs. Ashton saying, "What a joke! You know, Grace, I always said no woman could be as austere as *she* pretends she is." Then she jumped up and greeted Frances effusively.

"You must hear the latest," she said, after they were seated at table.

Mrs. Van Alstyne, who was present, looked up, warningly. "I would not repeat that if I were you, Carrie," she said.

"Why not? It is really too good to keep, isn't it, Grace?"

Mrs. Parthington nodded. At last she was even with Beatrice for the remark about the size of her soul.

Frances was interested. She relished a bit of gossip, and she had no idea of what was coming.

"Well, it is quite a long story," began Mrs. Ashton, with mischievous eyes. "It seems that Paul Charteris had an affair with some music-hall artiste—what is her name, Grace?"

"La Caprice."

"Oh, yes, Caprice of the Merry-Go-Round—a stunner! Well, he promised her a horseshoe, of abnormal dimensions" (Frances opened her eyes at the mention of the horseshoe), "but they quarreled, and he, to be revenged, gave the ornament to one of his other friends; and she wore it at a ball recently. Isn't that rich? Fancy, wearing a trinket designed for a woman like Caprice! And Beatrice Harmony to be caught like that!" Mrs. Ashton went off into a perfect gale, in which Mrs. Parthington joined.

Mrs. Van Alstyne looked grave, while Frances sat like one stunned. Beatrice wearing Paul Charteris's diamonds! It was incredible! Then she recalled Beatrice's explanation. These women must listen to her; they could not be left in ignorance of the truth.

"It would be funny if it were true," she began, bravely.

Carrie Ashton stared at her in amazement.

"True; of course it is true! We all saw the horseshoe!"

"But it was not sent to Bee; or, rather, she got it by mistake, and wore it for a joke; then the next morning she returned it to its rightful owner," explained Frances, eagerly.

"Now, isn't that just like Beatrice Harmony, to make the other woman feel uncomfortable! The poor thing will scarcely dare to wear it now!" Mrs. Ashton was indignant. Her story was shorn of its piquancy. She did not doubt the truth of Frances's explanation; Beatrice was noted for her indifference, and slander had never been able to fasten its teeth in her shoulder. But Mrs. Parthington was still skeptical.

"No doubt Beatrice told you that," she remarked, ungraciously.

Frances had an inspiration. "Just wait, and watch for the next appearance of the horseshoe! It may come out at Mr. Charteris's dinner. The real owner may wear it to-night to do him honor," she suggested.

Mrs. Van Alstyne looked relieved. "Of course, we might have known better than to expect a sensation from Beatrice. I don't believe she is made of flesh and blood like the rest of us," she said.

"You will have to do better next time, Grace," added Mrs. Ashton, maliciously. "You are still in her debt."

"Oh, am I?" sneered Mrs. Parthington, "well, I might as well confess that I don't believe a word of Frances's story—not one word of it!"

XIX

THERE were two diamond horseshoes, almost identical with the now famous one, worn at Paul Charteris's dinner.

As Mrs. Lloyd came into the dressing-room, and the maid removed her wrap, Mrs. Ashton clutched Mrs. Parthington's arm. "After all, Francie was right—there is the horseshoe!" she whispered, excitedly.

Grace Parthington stared. "It's not the same—it's smaller," she replied, incredulously.

"No, it isn't, Grace. Helena has been trying to win Charteris all Winter, and it would serve Beatrice right if she had succeeded." Then she went up to Mrs. Lloyd. "Oh, Helena, what a gorgeous horseshoe! It is just like Bee Harmony's, isn't it?" she said, sweetly. "When did you get it? You haven't worn it before, have you?"

Mrs. Lloyd frowned. She would not admit copying even an idea from the woman of whom she was jealous. "I ordered it some time ago, but jewelers, like dressmakers, disappoint, and Mrs. Harmony got ahead of me," she answered, carelessly.

Mrs. Ashton exchanged a meaning glance with Mrs. Parthington and went into the next room, where she lost no time in imparting the news to Frances that Helena Lloyd was now wearing the celebrated horseshoe.

But when, ten minutes later, Mrs. Leigh came in wearing a horseshoe, if anything larger than Mrs. Lloyd's, three women in the room were puzzled.

"Beatrice hasn't arrived. I'll suspend judgment until she comes," whispered Mrs. Ashton, on fire with excitement.

Beatrice was the last to arrive.

She was all in white—a soft, clinging gown of liberty satin, with ruffles of chiffon about her feet, and a fichu effect of chiffon drawn low over her shoulders and knotted at the bust. A single American Beauty rose nestled in the folds of the chiffon, but she wore no jewels of any description.

"Now, are you satisfied?" demanded Frances, triumphantly.

Carrie Ashton laughed. It was a good joke on someone, but on whom? Perhaps she would be able to fathom the mystery before the evening was over.

Certainly the horseshoe craze had set in at a fortunate time for its originators.

Charteris was talking to Mrs.

Leigh, but at Beatrice's entrance he made a quick movement toward her.

She came up, holding out her hand frankly. They had not met since her memorable visit to his rooms.

"I hope I'm not late, but Mr. Harmony leaves for Mexico to-morrow, and he needed my assistance until the last moment," she said, in her sweet, clear tones.

Charteris murmured something in reply, and then dinner was announced. He offered his arm to Frances Dunbar, and two or three of the other women gasped. It was bad enough to include both of the Dunbars in that select circle, but to give Frances precedence over them all seemed incredible.

Those who had greeted her coolly began to regret their mistake. She was too colorless to excite envy; no one took Charteris's championship to mean infatuation; they all understood it was caprice on his part to overlook the Princesse de Rennée, who was in town, and to exalt Frances Dunbar.

A caprice, certainly, and not to please himself. To please whom, then?

Althea Leigh? No. She was powerful enough to reinstate Frances without Charteris's aid, had she so desired. It was Beatrice Harmony, after all, and now she calmly announced her husband's departure for Mexico. Men like Paul Charteris gave nothing for nothing; and yet Beatrice was seated as far from her host as a round table would permit. He was between Frances, who carried her head proudly, and whom triumph had made almost pretty, and Mrs. Leigh, upon whose breast sparkled a gorgeous horseshoe.

Charteris smiled grimly as he caught sight of it. The original was locked up in his desk, and if Caprice heard of these others her suspicions would be averted from Beatrice. He was less afraid now that he would have to buy her off.

Beatrice, who had been taken into dinner by Alec Dunbar, was strangely exhilarated. Harmony's departure would leave her free. She knew him

too well to count upon his return; it was in truth a severing of the matrimonial bonds, which had hung so lightly on them both for many years. The farce of her married life was finished. Time would eventually free her from even the semblance of wifehood.

She was to make her home with her uncle, and later on go abroad; but the few weeks of the season that remained were her own.

She had no fear of the unknown, and she welcomed the excitement that was before her—the struggle between Charteris's passion and her own indifference.

There were days when she almost hoped that he would conquer; the absence of love had made her life so empty.

So she laughed, and talked rapidly to Alec, congratulating him on Frances's success, playfully deprecating her part in it when he would attribute it all to her.

"Ah, what could I really do? I had position, people would talk about what I did, but I was not strong enough to make them follow me," she confessed, with a show of humility.

"You should have married money, Bee; that is all you needed to make you a leader," replied Dunbar, admiringly.

"And that is so essential. Isn't there an old saying, 'If I have not wealth, I have nothing?'"

"No; I think it reads, 'If I have not love.'"

"Love?" Beatrice grew thoughtful. "Tell me honestly, Alec, if you lost Francie, would life be nothing to you?" She spoke so earnestly that he caught some of her gravity.

"I could not live if I lost her now," he answered, simply.

Beatrice sighed, then shook her head mournfully.

"And to think I must go through life not knowing what this wonder is!" she said.

Alec was puzzled. He had heard the rumor of Charteris's devotion, and, being a man of the world, he wondered if it could have lasted so long unrequited.

Then Beatrice unfurled her fan with a sharp click.

"This isn't exactly the conversation for a dinner, is it? I am afraid we will bring on an attack of indigestion unless we change the subject." She had recovered her spirits, and she smiled, mockingly, at his lugubrious countenance. "How do you like my frock? Isn't it the prettiest in the room?" she demanded, audaciously.

He brightened at the first touch of humor. This was the Beatrice he knew and liked.

Her other neighbor was Burton Edwards, and next to him sat Mrs. Parthington. She raised her voice, always of a penetrating quality. She was telling a story, and she intended that it should reach Beatrice's ears.

"It is a great joke on someone, but on whom? That is the question. A certain rich man presented a lady, whose fame comes from behind the footlights, with an odd ornament of diamonds." Not only Beatrice, but most of those at the table, were listening now. "The singer, who has a temper, so they say, quarreled with her lover, and flung the diamonds in his face. He, in turn, to get even, sent them to another woman, and I believe she has started a game with them; a sort of button, button, who's got the button?" She wound up with a laugh. "Funny, isn't it? A mystery to be solved—are you good at that sort of thing?" She turned and looked dismayed at the size of her audience. "Oh, I had no idea you were all listening!" she cried, but, meeting Beatrice's eyes, she flashed defiance at her.

Beatrice, who had grown cold during the recital, summoned a smile to her lips. "We beg your pardon, Mrs. Parthington, but we could not help overhearing your words. Of course, you would not wound one of us for the world! But it would be strange if it were another case of eavesdroppers hearing no good of themselves," she drawled, as if she personally had no interest in the matter.

Then she let her glance travel

slowly around until she met Charteris's eyes, dark with pain and anger.

Alec Dunbar laughed. He did not perceive the undercurrent of meaning; he was only amused at the clever way in which Beatrice got back at her old enemy.

His laugh relieved the tension and broke an awkward silence. Too many of those present had seen the original horseshoe.

That Mrs. Parthington dared to defy Charteris in his own house seemed audacious to the women who had heard the story before; and to Mrs. Van Alstyne it was an unpardonable breach of etiquette. So she rushed to Beatrice's assistance and diverted attention by plunging into a topic that was sure to excite general discussion.

XX

DURING the conversation that followed Beatrice regained her equanimity.

It was too unimportant an incident to have upset her, she reasoned. This was not the first intimation she had had of Charteris's former friendship for La Caprice. There were things like this in life, and she could not change them, though it offended her sense of nicety to have them brought to her notice. She preferred to ignore them, and now to have the knowledge forced upon her that Caprice disputed with her for supremacy in Charteris's affections, made her voluntary tenderness toward him vanish.

"He should not have placed us in the attitude of rivals; in doing so he has lowered me to her level, and I thought I stood alone on my pedestal," she reflected, bitterly; and then she turned with sudden fierceness and made some cutting remark to Burton Edwards. He felt sorry for Charteris; it was all up with him in this quarter.

The dinner drew to a close at last and they all adjourned to the drawing-room. One side of the room was banked with palms, forming a semi-circular background for the artistes

Charteris had employed to entertain his guests.

Vaudeville in a private house, where it might be as broad as one desired, tickled society's palate, and Carrie Ashton beamed with delight.

"Mr. Charteris, I'll sing for you. I have a new song, one that would be worth thousands on the stage!" she cried, taking her host into a corner to unfold her scheme to him.

She insisted that her appearance should be a surprise, and then she held a hurried consultation with Reggie Brown, her aid and abetter in every species of mischief.

Beatrice sank listlessly into an arm-chair. These things wearied her beyond description.

Gradually Charteris made his way to her side. Leaning over the back of her chair, he asked, softly: "Am I to have no word of commendation to-night?"

Two men were singing a famous "coon" song, and while attention was centred on them he hoped to get a few words alone with Beatrice. She looked up over her shoulder, her face cold and unsmiling.

"Commendation? For what? For the insult I was forced to put up with? I confess I almost envied that other woman, who could relieve her feelings by striking you," she answered, in a voice as soft as his own.

His eyes glowed with rage. "Surely, Beatrice, you know the story is a lie!"

She waved her fan carelessly back and forth. "The horseshoe I wore was not designed for her?"

He made a gesture of exasperation. "Let me explain," he begged.

"It would take too long. Besides, of what use are explanations between those who have no common bond of sympathy?"

"I love you!" he protested, passionately.

Beatrice smiled, a contemptuous widening of the lips, a narrowing of the eyes, but she vouchsafed no answer.

"By God! You shall hear me!" He was losing his self-control.

"Why don't you shout it aloud from the house-tops? I am sure the world would be interested; in fact, more interested than I am," she retorted, ironically, shrugging her shoulders, as if the last word had been said. Then she joined in the applause that proclaimed the ending of the song.

Charteris moved away angrily. What made him hunger for this woman's approval when he had the whole world from which to choose? If she were but free to accept his devotion, how quickly, gladly would he give up his liberty for the privilege of binding himself to her forever! What did her husband's departure really mean? Would it resolve itself merely into one of those separations that are so common nowadays? Or would she avail herself of the full privilege of her freedom? He dared not speculate upon that possibility.

Carrie Ashton's entrance created a fresh ripple of excitement. She was an artistic little thing, and from some shawls and scarfs of Eastern gauze that Charteris had picked up on his travels had fashioned a most effective costume. A scarf draped around her head, one end banding her forehead and the other drawn up to her under lip, served as a sort of disguise, that for a few moments deceived her audience. Then, from behind the screen of palms, Reggie Brown started a weird accompaniment on a guitar, and the quaint little figure began to sing.

Her voice was not disguised as well as her person, and at the end of the first verse Burton Edwards called out, "Brava, Mrs. Ashton! Brava!" A storm of hand-clapping followed. The song was about an Eastern girl who came to New York, and of the wonderful things she saw in the great city.

Carrie bowed her thanks and started on her second verse. Laughable comments were made on the latest fads, and the doings of society were politely ridiculed. In the third verse, however, the audacious little woman threw caution to the winds. The il-

lusions were veiled, but Mrs. Parthington and Mrs. Deyo grew uncomfortable. Then the bomb fell:

"And a singer of songs is paid with a kiss,
And rightly he says, 'What is gold to this?'"

Mrs. Van Alstyne moved angrily in her chair. How did Carrie know that De Lara sang for her without monetary compensation? And then—

"But I like best a prince who can diamonds shower;
Oh, would I were loved by that prince for an hour!
Why care if his fancy toward roving inclines,
So long as his pocket controls diamond mines?
For men are born fickle, 'tis only their ways,
And horseshoes are lucky, so everyone says!"

She disappeared, and silence ensued for at least a minute, then a murmur arose.

"Really, Carrie Ashton goes too far," drawled Mrs. Van Tassel Smyth.

"Too far! She was indecently impudent," retorted Mrs. Lloyd. She wondered if people were saying that after Beatrice had rejected the horse-shoe *she* had accepted it. She quite overlooked the fact that Mrs. Leigh had also worn one.

The latter had not stayed for the vaudeville, as she was one of the patronesses at the Assembly that night, and consequently she had been spared an embarrassing scene.

Charteris was dumfounded. He realized that Mrs. Ashton's song, after Mrs. Parthington's story, would damage, perhaps irretrievably, his chance of eventual success. Beatrice would never make herself ridiculous, and she had virtually been laughed out of his arms. He shut his teeth to keep back the curses.

Her eyes met his. All the delicate color had faded from her face, leaving it transparently pale; but she was smiling, and, try as he would afterward, he was unable to banish the memory of that smile.

Mrs. Ashton did not appear again.

She bade Charteris good-bye in the hall, and went on to the Assembly. The rest of the programme fell flat, and one by one the guests rose. They were all due some place or other, they explained.

"Will you come with us?" asked Frances, turning anxiously to Beatrice.

"Thanks, dear, but I am going home."

The shadows had deepened under her beautiful eyes, and even in the subdued light she looked distraught and weary.

"I think you'd better come," urged Frances, significantly. Beatrice drew herself erect, coldly; she had not reached the point of receiving patronage as yet.

"I am the best judge of that, Frances." Her tones frightened Frances. Charteris escorted Beatrice to her carriage.

"You are angry, and you will not let me explain," he murmured.

"I am not angry. To acknowledge anger would be to confess feeling, and I assure you your doings are, and always have been, a matter of absolute indifference to me. I am not blaming you for the limitations of your nature. How should you understand a woman's sensitive pride? You are only a man, after all, and when I admit that, I admit everything," she said, insolently.

Had he not been so wrought up, the tremor in her voice would have undeceived him, but he accepted her statement, and did not see that she was wounding him to ease her own pain.

"Tell the man I am going home," she said, as he opened the door of the brougham.

"Home? Then you won't be at the ball to-night?" he questioned, hurriedly. "Oh, Bee, when shall I see you again?"

"I don't know, I am sure. Mr. Harmony leaves for Mexico to-morrow. Good-night." Then she stepped in, the door slammed, and she was whirled away out of his sight. He stood looking after the carriage, dazed

by the pain of his inability to touch her heart. All that had gone before was child's play, but now he was realizing the force and strength of a passion that drives men mad.

XXI

THE next few days slipped by rapidly.

Beatrice made one more ineffectual appeal to her husband. "Let me go with you—I am afraid to stay in New York—alone!" she cried, hysterically. She was clinging now to the physical aspect of her married life.

Harmony swore at her for reply, and went angrily out of the room.

The parting did not cost either of them a pang; they had lived separate lives for so long that neither could miss the other's companionship.

Beatrice stayed a week longer in her own house before going to her uncle's. There was furniture to be sold, some of it to be stored, and the process of dismantling took time.

She worked unceasingly, and refused to spare herself; it was only in the excitement of actual labor that she was able to shut out the memory of Charteris's dinner. She had dressed for it so carefully, and she had taken a childish delight in Marie's extravagant praise. She had closed her eyes to reality, and had indulged in a day-dream. Well, she had awakened from that dream, and there was nothing left but scorn—scorn of herself, of him, of all their set. How she pitied the mean little souls who could take pleasure in such petty exhibitions of spite!

Poor Beatrice! She would not acknowledge, even to herself, the bitter truth.

Frances came in the last morning. "Alec wants you to promise to dine with us to-night. Calvé sings *Marguerite*, and we have succeeded in getting a box," she announced.

Beatrice shook her head. She was putting her gowns in the trays of her trunk. "You are very kind, Francie, but I leave here to-morrow, and there

is still a great deal to be done," she answered, carefully arranging the folds of the gown she had worn at Charteris's dinner.

"Leave it to the servants. Surely Marie is competent enough to superintend it all," urged Frances.

"Perhaps, but Marie has been staggering under too heavy a burden for years, and I cannot add to it now."

"How considerate you are of your help! To me, servants are machines, put there for my use."

"So they were to me when I had plenty; but these last few years Marie has served me in a way that cannot be valued in money. She has been maid, waitress, cook, even, when she thought Jane unequal to providing some delicacy to tempt my appetite; and all for twenty-five dollars a month!"

Frances grew thoughtful. "There is something very winning about you, Bee, if you only let people get close enough to your real self," she remarked, slowly, "but, as a rule, at the first sign of interest, you say some cutting thing, and turn the would-be friend into an enemy."

"My dear little philosopher, I don't believe in friends."

"Bee!" There was a world of protest in Frances's tones.

Beatrice threw back her head defiantly. "Honestly, friendship in the abstract is beautiful, but friends, my dear—they assume that name in self-interest."

"Who has hurt you now?"

Beatrice turned quickly. "Francie, tell me all you have heard about that wretched affair of the horseshoe," she demanded.

Frances quailed. "Oh, Bee, I would rather not!" she stammered.

But Beatrice was relentless; and finally Frances repeated the tale she had heard at Mrs. Ashton's luncheon.

"I told them what you said about its being sent to you by mistake, and I am sure they believed it, Bee," she wound up, in her confusion; "only Grace is so spiteful!"

"The story was partly true. Yes, Paul Charteris sent it, thinking I

might be caught by the glittering thing. I thought he was the sender, though it came anonymously; and I wore it that night to make sure. The next day I returned it, and that closed the incident for me. Further than this I know nothing." Beatrice spoke proudly. She was not defending herself to Frances; she was merely making a statement of the case.

"Then Paul Charteris is in love with you, and for your sake he has been so nice to us. He is king, socially, Bee," said Frances, musingly.

Beatrice stuffed the sleeves of a waist with tissue paper before she replied: "I don't care if he is every card in the pack, from ace down!"

"Mrs. Leigh wanted him two years ago."

"For a platonic adorer; she makes a cult of platonism."

"And Helena Lloyd is crazy about him."

"For a third husband? Is she really tired of Albert Lloyd, or does she merely want to create a sensation by bowling over the king-pin?" Beatrice mocked.

"Don't be sarcastic, Bee; it sounds as if you were an old maid disappointed in love; and he is really nice," Frances sighed.

"Are you also hankering after him? Well, I make you a present of him, of his handsome person, his devotion, his diamonds!"

Tears rose to Frances's eyes. She was hurt, and Beatrice was horrid this morning.

Fortunately, the entrance of Alison Deyo created a diversion.

"Have just heard of your smash up, Bee," she cried, cheerfully. Then she glanced around at the bare walls and rugless floors. "He didn't bolt with the furniture, did he?"

Beatrice laughed. "No; I am moving, that is all, Alison," she returned.

"Well, pack up and come down to Westbury with me. The country is fine now, and I have a new mare that you'll go crazy over," said Alison, enthusiastically.

"Thank you, Alison, but I am going to stay with my uncle."

"Nonsense! You'll die of stagnation at that house!" said the girl, impatiently.

"Alison, if Anne Leslie could only hear you! She fears you are a trifle rapid, you know," Beatrice said, with mock gravity.

"I wanted her to come to us," put in Frances, mournfully.

"And Mrs. Leigh offered me shelter. Really, you all make me feel as if I had just escaped the poor-house! I am not so badly off. I have five thousand a year, so I can't starve," blazed Beatrice, in a burst of wrath. They were very good and well-meaning, but they irritated her by their mistaken kindness.

"Oh, if you take it that way, Bee—" began Alison, stiffly.

Then Beatrice smiled. "Alison, Francie—" she held out a hand to each—"forgive me; I am tired and cross, and I don't deserve to have such dear friends. Now, don't urge me, girls. I am not pulling a bad stroke for myself when I move into my uncle's house."

"He could give you a million and not miss it!"

"Perhaps he could, Alison; at all events, he has been good to both Harry and me."

Alison changed the subject. "I say, Bee, I heard about Carrie Ashton's song the other night," she began, displaying her curiosity frankly, "and I would have given a good deal to have seen Mrs. Van's face at the reference to De Lara."

Beatrice launched into a ridiculous description of the affair, which made even Frances laugh, though she wondered how Beatrice could make light of such a personal matter.

"That's the best thing I've heard in years," commented Alison, as she drew on her gloves. "Take care of yourself, Bee; you look a bit down in the mouth. When you feel like paying me a visit, don't stand on ceremony," and after a hearty hug and a kiss Alison took her departure.

That afternoon Frances ran across Paul Charteris.

He stopped to speak to her, hoping to hear some news of Beatrice.

"I suppose you will be at the opera to-night, Mrs. Dunbar? Calvé as *Marguerite* will draw a crowd," he said, casually.

"Oh, yes, we are going. Mr. Dunbar was fortunate enough to secure a box. I tried to persuade Mrs. Harmony to join us, but she refused."

"A previous engagement, I suppose?"

"No; you see, she moves to-morrow, and, as she is not very strong, I think she is tired out."

Charteris made some sympathetic reply and passed on. Frances had given him the opportunity he was seeking.

XXII

CHARTERIS was dining with Mrs. Leigh that night.

"Just a quartet, Paul," she said to him as he entered the drawing-room. "Mrs. Lloyd and Mr. Edwards are coming. You know I hate to crowd my box."

Charteris seized his chance. "I almost feared I would be unable to get here, Mrs. Leigh. I have a splitting headache."

He made the explanation easily, and Mrs. Leigh smiled indulgently.

"You young men!" and she shook her finger at him. "Why don't you reform? Try it as an interesting experiment."

"I might grow to like it, and my future would be spoiled."

"No fear of that."

"Seriously, I do think of cutting loose from my old life and going away for a year or two. Tiger hunting often reforms a man."

She gazed at him curiously.

"There is more in this than meets the human ear," she soliloquized. "Who is to be your traveling companion?"

"Do you think I contemplate an elopement?"

"Ending, possibly, in marriage?"

Well, why not? You could do worse." She spoke reflectively.

"I am sure I could."

"Tell me, Paul—" but he interrupted her with a laugh.

"Ah, I knew I would rouse your curiosity. I contemplate nothing but a glorious finish to the best season we've had in years."

She rose and crossed over to where he sat.

"Don't you trust me?" she asked, with a strange vibration in her tones.

"I have no secret to impart."

"Really?"

"Really, Mrs. Leigh."

She sighed, but the entrance of Burton Edwards put an end to the tête-à-tête. Helena Lloyd followed shortly after. Her tall, slender figure appeared to be encased in a coat of mail.

"What is it—armor?" demanded Charteris, with his usual audacity.

"Mrs. Leigh, he is making fun of my frock," protested Helena Lloyd, pursing up her full red lips in a pout.

"Honestly, Mrs. Lloyd, it is beautiful, and I have never seen anything quite like it," he cried, enthusiastically.

"It's all spangles—silver spangles; you've seen them before."

"In black, yes—but in silver! Ah, it remained for you to don the costume of the queen of night. You are the moon, the spirit of poetry." He looked sentimental.

"Paul!" came a warning cry from Mrs. Leigh. She feared that even Mrs. Lloyd's vanity could not swallow such wholesale flattery.

"She is jealous," whispered Charteris, leaning over Helena and murmuring almost in her ear.

She was delighted. She fancied she was beginning to make a conquest of him.

He kept up the flow of banter all through the dinner, and he had rarely been in a more entertaining mood; but when they rose from the table he began his excuses to Mrs. Leigh.

"I feel so bad that I want to beg off to-night. Not even my favorite host-

ess nor my favorite singer can tempt me. I shall escort you to your box, of course; and then have I your permission to go home and sleep this off?"

"Certainly. I'm so sorry you are ill. Won't you take something for it?"

"I have been living on bromoseltzer all day," he answered.

A little after nine he was free, and as he walked away from the opera house he congratulated himself exultantly. He would see Beatrice to-night and win some word of comfort from her.

He walked through Fortieth street to Fifth avenue, and then up.

As he reached the house he saw there was a light in the second story windows. Would he be refused admission—had he come too late?

Marie opened the door, and took his card.

Beatrice was upstairs in what had been her sitting-room. She glanced round at the bare walls and packing cases, and hesitated.

"Very well, show him up," she said, finally; and then passed into her boudoir to make some change in her toilet. She wore an old skirt and a white cotton shirt waist, and her hair was in some disorder; but she was as pretty as she had ever been in evening dress. She fastened a ribbon around her neck and put on a belt; then she went back to receive her visitor.

"You see I am not prepared for guests, but I thought you must have something of importance to say, as you came to-night. You knew I was going to-morrow, did you not?" she asked.

Marie brought in two chairs, and Beatrice occupied one, motioning Charteris to take the other. But he preferred to stand. It gave him a slight advantage.

"Yes, I knew it, and realized that it was not a mere change of residence you have planned. You are trying to cut yourself off from us; you are tired of us—our pettiness, our shallow lives—and you are going to attempt something nobler," he commenced, earnestly.

"How did you guess?" She mocked at him.

"It is not guessing, it is instinctive knowledge born of my love for you. I have come to understand you, to look for a motive in the most trifling action."

She made a pretense at gravity. "Dear me, this is serious! I hope I don't disappoint you often."

He paid no attention to her flippancy, but went on: "And I cannot let you go without setting myself right in your eyes."

"Really, Mr. Charteris, is it fair to come here and force me to listen to things that do not interest me?" she asked, with a note of impatience in her voice.

She could not forget La Caprice. He drew back, as if she had struck him.

"I ask your pardon, Mrs. Harmony. You are right. I will go at once. Good-night, and good-bye."

He turned abruptly and started to leave the room. When he got as far as the door the perverse spirit died in her—she could not let him go in that fashion.

"Paul!" she breathed, softly.

Low as the word fell from her lips, he heard, and turned again, facing her with fire in his eyes. She was smiling.

"You need not be in such a hurry. I won't hear your explanation because—oh, well, because I forgive you freely without it," she said, and a thrill of exquisite joy quivered through her whole being.

He approached her slowly, as if still doubting the evidence of his eyes, his ears.

"Don't torment me!" he said, fiercely, in a low tone. "I love you!"

She put up her hand warningly.

"It was not for this I called you back, but that we might part friends," she said, trying to calm her riotous pulses.

"Beatrice, listen to me." He came close to her and stood before her chair, looking down at her white hands, lying clasped in her lap. "You have nothing to fear from me. Once, I

confess, I had no other wish than to force you into my arms; now, since this better love has been born in my heart, I feel only tenderness toward you. To see your dear face, to hear the music of your voice, to know that you do not think unkindly of me, that is all I ask. The perfume of this love will keep my whole life sweet. If I were only worthy of you, dear! Men take women at their own valuation, and I have learned so much of late, Beatrice—to realize all you are, and all you are to me." The tender vibration of his voice penetrated to her heart, and found an echo there. She could not speak; she was choked with emotion, but she held out both hands to him.

He understood, and as he bent his head over them, and kissed first one and then the other, it did not need their trembling to tell him that he was nearer to her heart than he had ever been before.

Long after he had gone she sat there as he had left her, dreaming. Love the Conqueror had swept every obstacle before him, and this woman, who had longed for his coming until she had grown bitter with hope deferred, found no strength to oppose him.

A little smile lingered at the corners of her mouth, and her eyes were luminous with happiness.

One blissful hour, and then the spell was broken. She was twenty-eight, and gifted with what the world calls commonsense.

"And this is love?" she mused. "Where is the peace—the great content? Ah, it is not for me! I writhe, I strain, I would burst the thongs that bind and sear. I always knew hearts burned with the flames of envy, malice and uncharitableness, but I did not know that hearts aflame with love burn fiercest of all!"

XXIII

THE next afternoon, when Beatrice was comfortably installed in her rooms at her uncle's house, Alison Deyo called.

"You'll be voting me a nuisance, Bee," she announced, cheerfully, "but I am going back to Westbury tomorrow, and I thought I'd like to inspect your new quarters before I went."

Beatrice welcomed her cordially. "I am more than glad to see you, Alison. I confess I was perilously near the blues," she said.

Her visitor gave a hasty glance at the bowl of violets and lilies-of-the-valley on the table. "Well, your friends seem not to forget you," she remarked, and, to her amazement, Beatrice blushed, a deep rosy hue that made her look five years younger.

Marie's entrance with the tea tray restored her composure, however. "May I light a cigarette?" Alison demanded, drawing a gold case from her pocket.

"Do you really enjoy it?" queried Beatrice, as she gave her permission.

Alison deftly struck a match before replying. "It's only one of my legion of shocking bad habits."

She was a wholesome-looking girl, whose skin had been tanned and freckled by constant exposure to the sun and wind. Her dark hair was braided and coiled neatly at the back of her small, well-shaped head. She wasted little thought over her personal appearance, and seemed guiltless of vanity. She was at home in the saddle, and bore with her the breath of the pines and the open country.

Beatrice gazed at her meditatively. She wondered if Alison had been through the fiery furnace. At last she gave voice to her reflections.

"Have you ever been in love, Alison?" she asked, lazily.

The girl sat bolt upright, and flicked off the ashes of her cigarette with her little finger. "Yes," she answered, slowly; "once."

"And that lasted you a lifetime?"

Alison nodded. "You see, Bee, mine was one of those straight-to-the-finish affairs," she began, seriously.

Beatrice settled herself back in her chair to listen.

"I was ten and he was twenty

when he came home for the holidays with my brother Frank. He taught me to ride, and one day when I went fishing with the boys and fell into the river he pulled me out, and helped dry my clothes, so that Mrs. Weston would not learn of my escapade and punish me. She did not believe in sparing the rod, and, good Lord! the beatings I got before I was sent to school! So, you see, I was very grateful to anyone who helped me out of a scrape."

The girl paused a moment to puff her cigarette, and then continued: "I did not see him again until Frank was married. He was best man, but, in spite of his duties, he found time to dance with me twice that night. I was fifteen, and leggy as a young colt, and he was the only man who was civil to me. Then I made a god of him! Some years later, when Mrs. Weston and I were doing the Alps, we ran across him at Kleine Scheidegg. The waiter told us about the American gentleman who had met with an accident the day before, and who appeared to be suffering greatly. I asked the name, and when I heard it I insisted upon nursing him. Mrs. Weston made a fuss, but I was always obstinate, and I had my way. His poor head was all bandaged and he was slightly delirious. It was two days before he knew me, but when he opened his eyes, and called me by name, ah, Bee, I was more than repaid!" Her voice trailed off into nothingness.

"Did he die?" asked Beatrice, in an awestruck tone. Who would have supposed that Alison Deyo had a romance hidden in her breast?

The girl laughed.

"Die? Of course not! He is alive, and just as much averse to double harness as ever," she retorted, gaily. "He looked upon me as a child then, and he was grateful to Frank's little sister; but I loved him, Beatrice, and there's never been anyone else."

"And he never guessed?"

"How should he? I guarded my secret carefully, and when he was better we went away. Since then we

meet every Winter; he grows stouter as the years pass, and his hair is turning gray and is very thin on top. If I told you his name you would laugh, for he doesn't look like the hero of a love-story."

Alison lit a fresh cigarette, as if the matter were of little concern to her now, and Beatrice stared into the fire and shivered. Then Alison's voice broke the silence. She had a mission to accomplish, and she scarcely knew how to set about it.

"How is it with you, Bee?" she asked. "This seems to be the hour for confidences."

Beatrice gave a nervous start.

"I—oh, I have no tale of love to pour forth," she answered, hastily.

"Didn't you ever care for Harry?"

"Not in that way. I liked him, but he had no desire for my affection."

"You were not in the race?"

"No, and there were plenty of others."

This was the opening Alison had hoped for, so she put her cigarette down and drew her chair closer to Beatrice's.

"You haven't been any place since he left, have you?"

"No."

"Then you don't know why I came in to-day?"

Beatrice drew a quick breath.

"Alison, what is wrong?"

"Well, someone had to break it to you, Bee, and I thought you'd rather hear it from a friend."

Beatrice held out her hands imploringly. "For mercy's sake, don't keep me in suspense!" she cried.

Alison took her hand in her own warm grasp.

"It's about Harry," she began.

Harry's wife gave an almost imperceptible sigh of relief. She did not know what it was she had feared.

"It seems that he did not go alone, Bee—a girl went with him."

It was out, now, and Alison felt easier. She had not known just how to accomplish her self-imposed task, and it had been more difficult even than she had anticipated.

"Alison!" came Beatrice's ringing

cry. "Not Angela Bryce? Oh, don't say it was Angela Bryce!"

"You knew?" But Beatrice had covered her face with her hands, and was moaning brokenly to herself. "Oh, the poor child! the poor child!" Then she looked up fiercely. "Why did not her parents stop her? She is crazy!"

Alison scarcely knew what to make of Beatrice's view of the situation.

"Stop her? They couldn't. They didn't know until yesterday," she explained. "She went off, apparently, to visit her sister in Baltimore."

Beatrice rose and moved about the room nervously. No wonder Harmony had resented her offer to accompany him! Strangely enough, beyond a vague feeling of irritation against her husband, Beatrice did not resent the wrong to herself. She was too agitated to view the case from the world's standpoint; and her horror at the crime perpetrated against a young girl blinded her to the insult to her own womanhood.

Suddenly she paused, and faced Alison with a strange glitter in her eyes.

"If men love us for the amount of adoration we are capable of bestowing upon them, then Harry ought to be very good to poor little Angela Bryce!" she said, vaguely. Then she broke down and, sinking into her chair, burst into a violent storm of weeping.

XXIV

ALISON soothed her as best she could. Finally the sobbing ceased, and Beatrice tried to smile through her tears. "And you came to break it to me, dear, so that I should not get my first wound from a careless hand? I don't know how to thank you," she said, tremulously.

"Bosh!" retorted Alison, inelegantly, but she winked her eyes rapidly, as if ashamed of their moisture.

"When was it known?"

"I heard it last night at the opera. Carrie Ashton told us, and by that time it was public property. Her

family is terribly broken up! It seems she wrote, exculpating Harry, and saying that she had followed him, and the rest of the usual rot. The idea of eighteen talking about undying affection!" Alison sniffed contemptuously, but Beatrice was not listening. She was wondering if Charteris had known last night that her freedom was a matter of months only.

Her freedom! Would she make use of it to forge new fetters for herself, as so many women had done?

Her thoughts, half-sweet, half-bitter, were interrupted by a knock at the door, and the maid entered with some letters.

Beatrice took them eagerly. One was from Harmony.

Alison withdrew to the window, where she stood gazing idly at the passers-by in the street, until she heard Beatrice suppress an inarticulate cry.

"It is true," she said, holding the open letter in her shaking hand. "He writes me from Chicago, and begs me to spare Angela's good name. 'Her good name!'" Beatrice laughed. "His lawyers will arrange everything quietly, and he promises to be a better husband to the girl who gave up the world for him than he ever was to

me." There was a pause, then Beatrice threw the letter carelessly on the table and sat down again.

"The world," she mused; "we talk of giving up the world as if, instead of being the top crust, we had roots that reach down to the centre of the universe. It is unpleasant, Alison, but I've got to face it; and perhaps he may be kinder to her. You know I thoroughly believe that the right woman can ennoble any man; but the right woman is so rare—so hard to find."

Alison knelt beside her friend and slipped her arms about her waist.

"After all, you don't care, do you, Bee?" she queried, anxiously.

"Care?" Beatrice iterated the word thoughtfully. "Well, it is mortifying, and it hurts my pride, but I don't bear either of them a serious grudge. It is strange, isn't it, that a man can make a mess of his life and, when he realizes his mistake, can wipe it out and begin all over again? Can a woman do that?"

Alison tried to read her eyes.

"Would you like to try?" she asked, tenderly.

Beatrice stooped and kissed the girl lightly on the forehead.

"Perhaps," she answered, softly.



HER VIOLIN

WHEN Phyllis tucks her violin
Beneath the rounded, dimpled chin,
I envy those white finger tips
That dare so near red, laughing lips.

When Phyllis tunes her violin,
Delicious thrills run out and in
And up and down, until I feel
The solid earth beneath me reel!

When Phyllis hugs her violin
So close beneath that dimpled chin,
I hold no man would count it sin
To wish to be her violin!

FLORENCE A. JONES

A FOOL AND HIS KING

THE King walked in his garden. His appearance indicated unrest; trouble in the palace had caused him to retire to the garden in irritation. He of the motley garb crouched on the ground near his royal master. In his hand was a red rose that ever and anon he touched caressingly with his other hand.

"Good Fool," quoth the King, "art thou wed?"

"Nay, sire," was the answer; "it may seem strange—a Fool and yet unwed; but the gods in making me a Fool felt it but just to award me some compensation."

"Would that the gods had made me, too, a Fool," murmured the King.

The great sombre eyes of the Fool swept over the King for a moment, and the corners of his mouth drooped ever so slightly.

"Then, my Fool," said the King, "there be no happy marriage? Is that what Folly's wisdom teaches?"

"Nay, O King," replied the Fool, "there still be miracles now and again, and also there be grossly stupid folk who wed and are content. To be happy in any condition one must needs be so high that trifles may not touch, or so dense that, touching never so roughly, they be not felt."

"Thou motley one," said the King, "thou givest me food for thought. I would walk alone; stop thou here," and the King moved slowly away until the blossoming shrubs hid him from sight.

The Fool watched him as he went, a great pity in his eyes, then he kissed the rose that he held and looked up toward an oriel in the Queen's wing of the palace.

"Dear King," he whispered, "how couldst thou know that happiness is only for gods and Fools?—gods, to whom all things are possible, and Fools, because of their folly," and again his eyes climbed swiftly to the oriel window and again he kissed the rose.

FRANK CHAFFEE.



HARD LINES

WHEN she sat on his lap
 She knew she did wrong;
 He was such a thin chap,
 When she sat on his lap
 It was not "a soft snap,"
 So she didn't sit long.
 When she sat on his lap
 She knew she did wrong.

M. T. HART.

THE TRIUMPH OF TRUTH

By Caroline K. Duer

WHERE the bright lances of the sunlight quiver,
Where the green shadows thickest fall and float,
Under the trees that fringe the quiet river
Dolly and I together in a boat.

I in the stern, composed and nearly napping
Over Lord Bacon propped against my knees,
Lulled by the lazy water's liquid lapping,
Calmed into cool contentment by the breeze.

She in the bow, with eager pencil scribbling,
Frowns on her brow—much reference to a book;
There floats her line, the little fishes nibbling
Round the limp bait on her forgotten hook.

"Are you at work?" "A teasing composition."
(Well, there are ills which age shall feel no more!)
"It's for a prize, but I've not much ambition—"
(Dolly's fifteen and I am thirty-four.)

"What is the subject?" "*Truth.*" A pause. We waited.
I looked amused and Dolly seemed perplexed.
Truth—by a schoolgirl pen elucidated.
Shade of Lord Bacon! What shall we have next?

"I have an essay here," I made petition,
"Written by one whom men accounted wise,
On the same subject as your composition—
Though I recall no mention of a prize.

"Well, shall I read it?" Dolly's looks were pleading.
Bacon was barred before a word was said.
"Must we improve these pleasant hours by reading?
Tell me a story—" coaxingly—"instead."

"Students of Truth, who much prefer a story,
Cannot expect the praise of fellow-man;
Not yours the prize," said I, "not yours the glory."
She laughed defiance, and I thus began:

Long, long ago—the years need not be numbered—
Far in the East, where learning brings reward,
Once, on a night, the King Darius slumbered,
Watched by three youthful captains of his guard.

And while they watched they spake together, saying:

"Shall we not write a sentence which is wise,
And set it here beside the pillow, praying
That, if at morn it meet the great King's eyes,

He may declare which of us best has striven?
And whoso's writing shall the judgment gain,
To him shall many goodly things be given—
As, to wear purple and a golden chain."

"Strong," wrote the first, "is Wine." "Above things human
Strong is the King," the second wrote. "In sooth,
Stronger," the third wrote, "than all else is Woman,
Yet doth the victory abide with Truth."

Now, when the King awoke he read the writing,
Summoned the young men to the council hall,
Bade each one claim the words of his inditing,
Read, and expound his meaning before all.

Then said the first: "Oh, men, Wine is the strongest.
It maketh glad the humble and the high.
It cutteth short the sorrow that is longest.
It filleth full the veins that have run dry.

"The wise man and the child it maketh equal,
And enemies clasp hands, and friends draw swords;
The King's thought, and the fool's thought, have no sequel,
And mirth and misery are its rewards.

"Wherefore, if Wine enforceth these excesses,
Is not its strength above the strength of men?
Oh, great indeed that power the grape possesses."
Thus spake the first, and held his peace again.

Then said the next: "Oh, men, by my opinion
The earth and all her increase—everything—
Is subject to your skill and your dominion—
Yet are ye still the subjects of the King!

"Do ye not dig in darkness for his treasure,
Bring him of every flock and every herd,
Build or destroy according to his pleasure,
Fight or make peace as he has given word?

"Do ye not live or die to swell his power,
Bring of your spoils to magnify his fame,
Yield him a tribute for each quiet hour,
And bow and tremble here before his name?

"Therefore, I say, if thus and in such fashion
He is obeyed and feared by old and young,
Is not the King more mighty than Man's passion?"
And having spoken thus, he held his tongue.

Then spake the third: "Not the great King excelleth,
Nor Men, nor yet the Wine which ye condemn;
But who subdueth these, and who compelleth,
Who hath dominion over all of them?"

"Is it not Woman? Surely Woman bore him
Who planted vineyards from which cometh Wine.
She bore the King, and they who bow before him—
The rulers of all lands and every line.

"Have ye not toiled and labored among strangers,
Borne for her hardships which ye dreamed not of?
Doth not a Man fight among many dangers—
And brings he not the spoil to please his love?"

"Many have served as servants for a season
To win a Woman whom they might not take.
Many have run out of all wit and reason,
Have erred, and sinned, and died for Women's sake.

"Even the King, he whom ye fear and honor,
When, at the feast, the fair-haired Apomé
Seized on his crown, gazed slavishly upon her,
Flattering, lest she should use him spitefully."

"Is not a Woman strong, then, O my brothers,
Since, beside her, the King himself is weak?"
Then all the council looked each at the others,
While the young man of Truth began to speak,

Saying: "Yea, strong are Men, and Women even
More strong, and great the Earth, and deep the Seas;
Swift is the Sun to run its course in heaven,
But is not Truth more mighty yet than these?"

"It shall endure, although the Earth shall perish.
Rulers ye fear and Women ye adore—
But Truth, if ye have wit the Truth to cherish,
Shall live, have strength, and conquer evermore."

Then all the people cried, without delaying,
"Great is the Truth, and mighty in our eyes!"
And the King turned unto the young man, saying,
"Ask what thou wilt, for thou hast won the prize.

"Here is your story. Now, I wonder whether
You see the moral, which is plain to me?
Women and Truth are seldom named together,
And this surprise gained him the victory."

"Oh, no," returned Miss Dolly, with some neatness,
Laughing as Eve laughed when the world began,
"Sometimes I think it takes all Woman's sweetness
To make the Truth acceptable to Man."

A QUESTION OF RESIDENCE

THEY had been dancing fast, and were now in search of a cool, quiet corner.

"Come this way," she said.

He followed through the window to the dark end of the long piazza, where they found a wicker tête-à-tête.

"Ah! isn't this fine?" he said.

It was an intermission after five long dances, and the night was warm. The ballroom was soon deserted. Here, at the end of the piazza, they found themselves alone. The situation pleased. She was tall, with black hair and eyes to match; well dressed and a beauty. He was handsome, but not very tall, with rich auburn hair and cold blue eyes.

"So you are from Boston, are you, Miss Dean? What do you think of New York?"

"Oh, I came only yesterday," she said.

"I thought you had been here several weeks."

"Mr. Temple, do you think Boston girls are cold? You know the funny papers are continually referring to the Boston girls as 'ice plants,' 'skate roads' and 'liquid air.' They are horrid."

"They certainly are—the papers," he said.

He thought her charming. He did not think her cold.

"No, Miss Dean, I don't think Boston girls are cold."

The air was growing chilly.

One of his hands somehow found one of hers. She didn't appear to mind at all.

"Is Boston a very pleasant place, Miss Dean?"

"Yes, indeed," she said.

He was still holding her hand. Presently he lifted it to his face and kissed it. And then, somehow, it rested upon his shoulder—not the one next to her.

"Isn't it delightful out here?" she said.

"It certainly is," said he.

He leaned over toward her, put his arms about her, and kissed her.

The position was good. He liked it immensely. He felt her arms about his neck, tighter and tighter.

The position was better. She didn't say anything. He didn't reply.

They heard the music begin. It sounded far away, and they didn't care.

It stopped, but they hardly noted it.

After several dances, some angry man went to look for her to claim his dance, and they had to go inside.

When the ball was over and he was saying his good-nights to her, she told him he must come to see her right soon. He said he certainly would, the very next day.

The next day, at lunch downtown, he met the host of the night before.

"Deucedly fine girl, that Miss Dean from Boston," said Temple. "I must call on her."

"She isn't from Boston," said his friend.

"She isn't? Then from where?" said Temple, excitedly.

"From Chicago, and she went home this morning," said his friend.

C. G. GRIBBLE.

BAYARD BENDELOW

A CHRONICLE

By Edgar Fawcett

IF his father had died a few years earlier, say when he himself was fifteen or thereabouts, Bendelow might have felt for him a genuine filial grief. But now? As he sat back, quite alone, with folded arms, in the first of the carriages which followed the hearse to Greenwood, it must be owned that he felt very collected and firm.

He was not himself aware just how rich his father had left him. There were many houses in New York owned by Aaron Bendelow when he died, and these meant many millions of dollars. But the railroad interests were tremendous besides. Then there were mining interests which had also to be reckoned with, and which were hugest of all, since the dead man had been a Western Cæsus before he chose to pull up his California tent-stakes and become an Eastern one.

Bayard Bendelow received everything, apart from a few minor legacies to distant relations and so-called friends. His austere, hard-headed, hard-hearted parent had no real friends, but he chose to scatter a delicate little shower of largess on certain folk who had aided him to gather together his colossal wealth in previous times. His wife had died years ago, when Bayard was the merest lad. Ill-educated himself, having begun life as a common miner in Colorado, Aaron Bendelow had lavished education upon his only child. First there had been assiduous tutors, then a term of two years at Harvard, and then (since marked talents had shown themselves in Bayard) a withdrawal from the American "Cambridge" to

the English one, where graduation was attended with conspicuous honors.

The fortune which Bayard had inherited easily passed one hundred million. Everybody—even the least imaginative of Wall street financiers—admitted this. There were others who insisted two hundred million. In such cases there are always exaggerations. Bayard himself, on returning from the funeral and entering the magnificent home which his father had erected in upper Fifth avenue, facing Central Park, told himself that he must have a very serious talk with certain legal custodians of the whole vast property.

"It is probably nearer one hundred million and a quarter than two," he meditated, while pacing the floor of an apartment princely in every detail. "Well, if it were only fifty its income would still be monstrous. But I know one thing from my talks with father: the very least I shall have, at most ordinary percentages, will be five millions a year."

A long mirror met him just then in his slow walk—a little journey *au tour de sa chambre*, quite reposeful, not marked by the faintest nervous hurry. In this mirror he saw himself reflected completely, and realized (not for the first time) that he had a small, comely head, clean-chiseled features, a tall and graceful figure, neat-rounded limbs, feet of shapely outline, symmetric hands. He brushed the curly hair back from his forehead a moment and then passed on.

"I'll do." He meant that the felicity of his general appearance corresponded with that of his fortune.

Presently he dropped into a big, soft armchair and continued his musings:

"Well, here I am, Bayard Bendelow, with the world literally at my feet. I have youth, perfect health and wealth prodigious. I have not high birth, but in America my riches make the lack of that inconsiderable. I have been intellectually well trained; I am what the world calls a gentleman. Life teems for me with possibilities of enjoyment. What man of the greatest distinction would not be proud to entertain me? What woman of the most exclusive cult would not be glad to let her daughter bear my name? How, then, shall I deal with my purple chances?

"How but in one way? I stand for the one sovereign and unrivaled power that governs mankind in the age to which I belong. That power is money. I am the living incarnation of Wealth. Existence is a battle, and I am born into it with an Excalibur of magic gold.

"Like my father, I have little of so-termed sentiment. Like him, I find it difficult to see where sentiment ends and mawkishness begins. Charity? Its dangers to society are great unless the utmost caution guides it. The poor should not be pauperized. It is a law of life that many should struggle, many fail and a few succeed. The wisest philosophers, the keenest political economists, have conceded this. Gifts to the worthy institutions can do no harm, but so much official mismanagement exists in them that large bequests mean too often a foolish liberality. In this direction, however, I desire, of course, to be as generous as prudence will sanction. And so, after all, it comes to the question of a justifiable egotism. A crown has fallen to me, and I will wear it with becoming dignity. The world is not yet prepared for any gigantic scheme of philanthropy. Men do not love one another yet. Perhaps they never will. Altruism is simply thrown away upon them.

"I will try to found a family, and I hope to become the father of children who will honor me while I live

and cherish my memory when I have passed away. Meanwhile, I shall accept and duly value—why not?—the tribute paid to my greatness. For such wealth as mine means greatness; there is nothing that my fellow-creatures so respect. Reasonably, too, since it can purchase all that is worth possessing. It cannot, of course, defy death, but it can deflect the course of what we call destiny and ease our mortal careers of almost every minor ill."

During the next two years Bayard Bendelow found himself literally worshipped in New York. Each Summer he took a trip abroad, and there, too—in England, France, Italy, Germany—he received a secondary yet distinct homage. In these days he was very patriotic; he wished distinction everywhere, but he felt chiefly proud of that which his own country accorded him.

The attentions of certain smart New York ladies now and then bored him. Beautiful young girls gave him their choicest smiles, but one evening he met a Miss Lilian Van Corlear, and promptly fell in love with her. She was a blonde, star-eyed, a vision of delight. She repelled him a little, too, but the fact did not displease him. It flavored her enchantment with a delicate insolence, piquantly novel. He must woo her—if he wanted her; though poor, she came of just the solid old Knickerbocker stock with which it pleased him to form an alliance.

He did woo her, during the next few weeks, and finally discovered that she cared nothing for his money and would only marry a man whom she loved. Perceiving that she was highly intelligent, exquisitely refined, not in the least a coquette, he loved her more than ever. The despair of her mother and of several near relations amused him. They were all in terrible dread lest Lilian should make a fatal, romantic, irreparable mistake. But all the while he was certain of securing his prize. One day, however, to his extreme mortification and chagrin, Lilian Van Corlear told him

frankly that she did not love him, that she would never love him, and that she begged his attentions would straightway cease.

Even then he laughed at her verdict. The mother and the relatives were passionately on his side. But he would not stoop to seeking their aid. For the first time in his life he suffered acutely. His heart bled, and his pride as well. People who heard the rumor of Lilian's indifference laughed at it. "Impossible!" cried society. While Bendelow was in a torment of perplexity and doubt, the news burst upon him that Lilian Van Corlear had eloped with a young doctor, of no special position or influence, whose income could not be more than six thousand dollars a year.

By degrees he recovered from this shock, though he was never quite the same man after it. He had formed his own theories, as we know, and here had fate suddenly stepped in to challenge and subvert them! He did not soften on recognizing the fact that money, and even semi-omnipotence, were far from being agencies; on the contrary, he hardened, and became infused by an arrogance of whose first stealthy approaches he was himself unaware.

A little later he was accepted by a girl of high social place, strikingly handsome, and an heiress of no mean claim. She was Ellinor Torringdon, admitted by her best friends to be ambitious, but by her worst foes to have much womanly worth. She and Bendelow made what folk called a striking couple. Her stature was only a little below his, and she had heavy masses of night-black hair and a face full of pride and courage, yet withal touched by a surpassing sweetness. After their marriage they lived for a number of years the life of the very prosperous New Yorkers: that is, they gave sumptuous entertainments to a certain circle of exclusives, whom other would-be exclusives fiercely envied. They treated the Atlantic Ocean as dead and gone New Yorkers used to treat the Brooklyn ferry, and were as familiar with the sands of

Egypt as with those of Long Island, with the lindens of Berlin as with the elms of Central Park. In respect to London and to England generally, they not only knew them very well, but knew many of their prominent citizens. They lived, in short, the modern cosmopolitan life of enormously rich Americans. A great retinue of servants followed them when they went abroad; few European princes traveled more luxuriously.

Two children, in the early years of their marriage, had been born to them. The first was a boy, Aaron, healthy, strong, with traces of his mother's beauty and of his father's athletic frame; the second was a girl, Evelyn, with the paternal cast of features, but the maternal eyes, dark and velvety, the maternal grace of bearing, elegant and secure. Bayard Bendelow was proud of both his children, just as he was proud of his clever and queenly wife.

But it irked him to be courted and pointed at *solely* because of his huge wealth. He had certain political opinions of a very pronounced sort, and since he had chosen to aid with liberal contributions the party of his preference, this party, when at one time placed in power, broadly hinted to him that he should receive its full support if he chose to accept the nomination for a Washington Senatorship. But Bendelow declined the overture. He disliked Washington life (of which he had had a taste), in the first place; and in the second place, he knew himself to be a capable but by no means brilliant speaker. If he could have gone into the Senate and become another Sumner or Conkling, this would have altered matters most radically. But to sit without startling distinction in an assemblage where both brains and oratory were paramount, offered no appreciable lure. Instead of such honor he contrived to make it plain that he would accept with satisfaction the Ambassadorship (it was then called a Ministership) to the Court of St. James. This suggestion was duly considered, and with a certain delay

because of pecuniary promises, ethereally noncommittal and yet altogether substantial in their import, which accompanied it. But no. An answer finally came that the English mission must, for imperative reasons, go elsewhere. Bendelow could have his choice, however, of three other first-class missions, if disposed to make it.

He had reached just that stage of autocracy when such a response could, and did, arouse his foolish wrath. But he had the prudence to conceal it, and politely declined all the three brilliant positions proffered him. For days, however, he suffered pangs of consternation. Here was a new rebuff. Once more money had failed to buy for him something that he eagerly craved. Of all things, he believed that money would buy him this. And yet a stronger power—call it “political obligation,” “party pledge”—anything one pleased—had driven him and his millions back into defeat.

Meanwhile, he was writing a book which he felt his name would push into the most flattering popularity. It concerned what he held to be great and active wrongs in his own country. The pages which he had read to his wife won her cordial approval, though she advised, here and there, certain changes either of suppression or amplification. When the book appeared it was at once immensely advertised by long newspaper reviews. And then, after a few days, other reviews, bitterly assailing, appeared. “Evidently, a pushful vogue,” he thought, “will send the volume on into many thousands.” But no such sale occurred. The public, notwithstanding the cleverness and undoubted force of the work, unaccountably refused to buy it. For a week or two it was briskly sought; then followed a complete collapse. The book gave its writer no celebrity, not even a shadow of real prominence. Stung to the quick, Bendelow consoled himself with the thought that in England it might achieve a handsomer fate. He had it republished in London, and there, to his fresh regret,

it was passed over with a respectful indifference. In America its sale had reached two thousand five hundred copies; in England two hundred proved the limit of the demand.

Once again Bendelow chewed the acrid cud of disappointment. He to receive this affront, when writers of slovenly prose and third-rate talent circulated their trash in scores of editions! He chanced to know a man of widely conceded literary force and of marked selling capacity besides. “My dear J—,” he said, “will you kindly read my book very attentively once more—I know you have been good enough to read it once—and tell me why it is not successful?”

J— acquiesced, though he hated the task. After a day or two, however, he gave this honest verdict, being a man whom all the multi-millionaires in Christendom, or out of it, could not seduce into a mere mollifying lie:

“My dear Mr. Bendelow, your book is able in the highest degree. Passages of it are models of good style. But somehow it is not magnetic; it does not lead the reader on from page to page. If you ask me why it does not, I cannot answer. Yet I can say this: the impression produced is one of its having been written in a mood of too great self-security—of refusal to abate its intellectualism by a single concession.”

The speaker paused here, and Bendelow broke in, with raised brows:

“Concession? To what, pray?”

“To your public—your potential readers.”

“I see,” said Bendelow, though not with even veiled annoyance. “It is full of self-importance. It strikes the note of command rather than that of appeal. It has not the fragrance of sympathy. Yes, yes; I perceive, and I thank you.” He pressed the hand of his friend quite warmly, and then made a slight upward gesture with his own. “But I could never write that other way! It isn’t in me. I might have managed the thing, perhaps, in earlier years, if only—” Here he stopped dead short, and pres-

ently added: "Your criticism couldn't have been keener. I shall never try again. If I did, it would only be failure. I see why. Never mind. Once more, many, many thanks."

Here was a still deeper wound of defeat. "There are more things in heaven and earth," Bendelow grimly misquoted, "than my philosophy of omnipotent money has dreamed of."

Not long after this a sudden illness attacked his hardy and stately wife. He never fancied, at first, that it could be more than a passing ailment. Weakness in Ellinor seemed anomalous; her bodily vigor had always appeared like the complement of her mental force. But soon he had the appalled sense that she was being swept out into deep water. "I will indeed reward you if you save her life!" he said, impetuously, to one of her physicians. And then he named a certain very large sum. The physician, who was both celebrated and rich, gave a haughty start. "Mr. Bendelow," he said, "I have but one price for my professional services. If I accepted any larger one I should almost regard my doing so in the nature of having taken a bribe." . . . Bendelow, with mounting color, was on the verge of a supercilious retort. In a second he had felt a flash of respect for this man pass through him. But that and the new little stab at his theory regarding the lordliness of wealth were considerations which broadly diverged. The fame and the great accredited skill of the physician tamed, in briefest time, his anger. He at once made a stammering apology—the first his lips had framed since once in boyhood, when his father was its recipient. At the same moment his eyes filled with tears—the first he had shed since boyhood, as well. The physician grew promptly gracious. But his efforts were vain in the case of Ellinor, who died a few days later.

Bendelow was for weeks benumbed and stunned. This high-strung, capable and fascinating woman had stood for him, through years past, as the natural aid and counselor of his life. To lose her was like losing a

limb, an eye. His grief was purely selfish, but on this account hardly the less profound. He had never loved her in any passionate way, as he had loved Lilian Van Corlear. But he had leaned upon her for advice and support; he had been certain that their ambitions were close allied; he had felt that in all effort toward further notability and predominance she would be with him to the death. And now "the death" had come with such irony of earliness! He had thought of her as burying *him*, thirty years later, and had pictured her, white-haired, erect, in the majesty of a distinguished widowhood.

He brooded, now, over his theory. The tower of it, so to speak, seemed tottering. But soon he resented this viewpoint; for had he not always admitted its vulnerability to death?

While his wound was healing he realized all the ugliness of its residual scar. But since his sorrow was far more deeply tinged by solitude than sentiment, since he missed Ellinor much more deeply than he mourned her, a rehabilitation of spirits brought eventual relief. His children, too, stimulated this cheerful change. Evelyn had grown into a charming girl, and Aaron was almost prepared for college. Any father on earth might be proud of so clever and comely a lad as Aaron. His tutors did not praise him; that was a good sign. They merely said to Bendelow, in so many words: "He has reached this point; he has reached that. He has mastered so-and-so; he has achieved in thus-and-thus the following high record." And Bendelow found himself gradually glowing more warmly with parental exultation. The time, as recorded, was almost ripe for his son to enter college. But what college? Harvard? Yale? It lay between these two. Suddenly, however, he told himself that it did not of necessity lie between these two at all. Why should it? For himself, he had grown bitterly tired of the incessant publicity poured upon him as "one of our leading millionaires" by the American press. He had got to loathe

the American press. It was forever spying upon him; it would have liked to note the occasions on which he sneezed; it burdened him with the *chhui* of his own goings and comings. Now in England, he fell to reflecting, they did all this so differently. And then how pleasant to have Aaron go to Oxford! He had now passed the necessity of a preparatory Eton or Harrow; he could enter at once into the grand old University itself. "To be near him," thought Bendelow, "would prove exceedingly pleasant. I might secure some home in Oxfordshire, and spend certain months of the year there. An English *entourage* of instructresses would be beneficial to Evelyn. Yes, I will carry out some such plan."

Not long after he had lodged Aaron at Oxford as a disciple of Magdalen College he rented a magnificent place, hardly six miles away, belonging to the Earl of Arrowby. A little later, finding that this estate was purchasable, though at a very large sum, he made it his own, with all its noble grounds, all its precious interior grandeurs and charms. Here he lodged Evelyn, giving her more attendants and feminine tutors than fall to many princesses in Europe. A little later, desiring to be nearer London, he bought another spacious residence on the Thames, near Twickenham, from a broken-down South African millionaire, who had formerly paid for it a great sum to an impecunious peer. Still again, wishing to pass, when whim directed, the London season in London itself, he gave nearly two hundred thousand pounds sterling for an august house in Grosvenor Square.

All this he did in the most unostentatious way, and subsequently learned that Royalty would be pleased to have him presented at Court. For a while he rather shrank from this delicately insinuated proposal, recalling how large and often vulgar a throng of his countryfolk had already thrust itself into Buckingham Palace and St. James's. But his own presentation, came the diplomatic whisper,

would carry with it a peculiar and separate meaning. So he gave consent, and soon afterward received a visit from one of the members of the royal family at his abode on the Thames. English society had hitherto welcomed him; it was now at his feet. Repeatedly it was hinted to him that if he became an English citizen he might, through a course of discreet and lavish charities to certain institutions endorsed by conservatism, attain a baronetcy, which might in time be succeeded by a barony or perhaps an earldom. But he shut his ears to all such furtive solicitations. Heredity and the saving grace of good taste worked their will with him. He disliked much in the country of his birth, but there was also much in it that here, from a distance, he found ample cause to respect. Meanwhile, he would often smile to himself at the way in which many members of the smartest sets, many scions of the oldest patrician families, paid to him an almost ludicrous homage. For his son, Aaron, he greatly desired a title and a social status of the loftiest. When the lad reached twenty-one he had made him a citizen of England, but even while effecting this change a sharp alarm assailed him.

Aaron's first term at Oxford had been a disappointment. He had got into a smart set, beyond doubt—one of which a young duke, a young marquis and three young earls were members; but it was also a set exceedingly fast. Both drinking and gaming prevailed in it. With reproachful headshake Bendelow said to his son: "Your allowance is too large. I have been too foolish, but I believed the most implicit trust could be placed in you. I see, now, my mistake."

Forthwith Aaron's allowance was perceptibly curtailed. It still remained generous, however. During the next six months he added to the evil reputation he had already acquired. His health, too, began to show signs of failure. The college authorities had begun audibly to growl at his own and his companions'

rash pranks. Presently one of these latter, a youth decidedly born in the purple, was punished by expulsion. Bendelow and his son held the first vitally serious talk of their lives. "Aaron," he said, with excessive yet controlled anger, "I have now but a single course left. Your allowance is reduced to a quarter of what it was formerly." He went on speaking, and his further sentences brimmed with melancholy and rebuke. It seemed to him that Aaron's manner was hard to the verge of sullenness. On his face the ravages of late hours, perhaps of far worse follies, were already manifest. Touched by an actual terror, Bendelow at last exclaimed:

"Oh, my son, think of how grieved your mother would be were she alive to-day!"

Aaron's eyes flashed, then, with defiance: "You have decided, sir, to impoverish me like this! Well—" and he turned toward the door—"my mother, to whom you have just referred, has, fortunately, saved me from the consequences of such a course. Next week, if you remember, I shall be one-and-twenty. My mother willed to me a million dollars, and to Evelyn the same. It will be due me on my twenty-first birthday. I shall instruct my solicitors to request it of you, as you are its appointed guardian and trustee."

Aaron, with these words, immediately left his father's presence. Bendelow's wrath was at first boundless. Death did not strike him as too severe a penalty for his son's atrocious revolt. He closeted himself; he remained for some hours the prey of a ravaging distress. Afterward he took counsel with a wise friend in whom he greatly trusted. This friend advised him to write Aaron (who had at once hurried back to Oxford) a conciliatory, admonishing, entreating letter. The friend even composed such a letter, an admirable piece of work, suited perfectly to the trying occasion. But Bendelow, after copying it, could not sign it. He sent Aaron his inheritance a few days

afterward. He felt that it was almost like putting a pistol to the boy's brow. Still, whatever happened, it would not be he who would pull the trigger. That remained for Aaron himself to do.

He realized now with what utter worldliness he had reared his son. And Ellinor—she, too, had made the same fatal blunder. Always the idea of power, notability, personal supremacy, had been placed before his mental sight. The moral impulse had been cultivated also, but with what relative laxity and languor! These were dreadful days for Bendelow. He sometimes felt as if he were sweating blood. What would his son do with those two hundred thousand pounds which he, his father, had had no power to keep from him? In a little while came odious news. Aaron had deserted Oxford. He had gone up to London for good. He was living there the wildest of wild lives. Evelyn, who dearly loved him, besought her father with prayers and tears to seek him out and save him. "Let us go together," she said, with both arms round Bendelow's neck. He kissed her and stroked her hair, but refused again and again. And yet, in the end, Evelyn prevailed.

They went to London, and found Aaron dwelling in costly apartments at one of the most fashionable hotels. But his life! Both shrank from it with horror. All Bendelow's pride, however, had now melted into a passionate fervor of fatherhood. He felt as if some devilry of malignest sort had gripped his son, and he spared himself no humiliation in striving to shatter its spell. If Aaron should strike him, he told himself, he was now capable of returning the blow with an embrace. But Aaron did nothing of the kind. He was always in this or that phase of alcoholism—sometimes imperiously obstinate, sometimes merrily bacchanal, sometimes hopelessly maudlin—forever impregnable to either Evelyn's eager supplications or his parent's desperate devices of restraint. There were places to which Bendelow could

scarcely with dignity follow him; but he did follow him, with a patience that had in it a truly sublime touch. Now and then he would win a victory; its results would last for several days. Aaron would affirm himself repentant—not seldom with deep sincerity, too. Evelyn would spend hours at his side. The three would sometimes go together to the play. But while the young man's health palpably grew feebler, he would keep yielding to the spells of his demon, breaking all bonds of guardianship and finally collapsing in utter bodily defeat. Bendelow, who saw the end approach with insidious yet savage haste, wondered if some old family curse might not have cropped out again in his ill-starred offspring. He knew so little of either his father's or his mother's ancestry. All that he really had gathered was that both were born from the great unlettered masses. Here was another force with which he had not reckoned—that of heredity, in all its mighty and complex concerns.

When Aaron had become the merest wreck he yielded himself without resistance, and died a somewhat lingering though painless death under the devoted vigilance of his kindred, surrounded mockingly by grandeurs that hinted, with frightful sarcasm of inuendo, at the splendid heritage which he might have secured. "And this," said Bayard Bendelow, on the day of his funeral, after all was over, "means what I meant when I told myself, years ago, that the world was at my feet! This is the crown which I believed had fallen to me—'an iron crown of anguish,' indeed! Here is the 'greatness' by which I defined such wealth as I possess! Here is the end of my valiant battle, with my Excalibur of gold! Well, grant that such misfortunes as mine are exceptional. Does this fact prove any the less potentially the emptiness of my early boast? Poverty begets misery, but can wealth—great wealth—beget real power? What *is* real power? Is not its name Love? And have I ever striven for that? And is not its

other name Happiness? Is there any conceivable happiness *except* in love? And what legions of precious chances do we rich of the earth tread under foot when we refrain from bringing comfort, hope, encouragement, rehabilitation to our kind? But ah, the satire of it all! Through pain alone we are taught the pain of those about us—and not all of us learn the lesson even then. Many of us, flung down by fate as I am now, clench our teeth and turn harder below her vivisectioning knife. Not so shall it be with Bayard Bendelow. In a certain sense I trust to rise cured from this bitter surgery of circumstance!"

Cured? He hardly knew what he meant when the half-murmured word escaped him. He had visions, aims, intents, all as yet vague. But he was not quite sure as yet. After all, the pull of the world was strong. Could he and would he quite resist it hereafter?

A few days later there came to him a decided glimpse of how radical was the change in his own spirit. He had already considered the plan of returning to his America and there occupying himself with some certain very comprehensive and original charities. But something had happened that same afternoon, of a character totally unforeseen. It related to Evelyn. It had dazed him at first. They had recently talked together over the meditated charities. The girl had now become to him a positive woman, through all these late weeks of mutual anxiety and suffering. She had reminded him less and less of her mother; the resemblance now seemed solely physical. Moreover, she had made herself pricelessly dear to him. Her mother had never done that.

He found her sitting with a book, in her black dress, beside a lamp which the faded twilight had just rendered needful. They spoke together for a little while, and then he said, with an abruptness that he felt it impossible to avoid:

"What, Evelyn, if I didn't take you with me to America, after all?"

"But you mean to stay if you go,

papa," she exclaimed, losing color.

"You told me that you did."

"Yes, I mean to stay."

"But, papa——"

Bendelow took her hand. "My dear," he said, "I received a visit to-day from a great personage."

"You're always receiving such visits, are you not?"

"This was one of peculiar meaning. Do you remember meeting the young Duke of Devergoil? Yes, I'm sure you do, both in Oxfordshire and at certain London houses."

"Oh, yes. He has lemon-colored eyebrows, papa, and a very large nose and a chronic simper. I recollect him very well. You afterward told me that he was one of the richest of all the dukes, and that his reputation was irreproachable." Here Evelyn laughed a little nervously.

"Did I tell you that?" mused Bendelow. "Well, I've forgotten, dear. But it is true—quite true. And he is also, perhaps, at the present moment, the greatest match in England. Well, Evelyn, he has just asked me if I would let him ask you——"

"Papa!" Evelyn sprang from her chair.

"—to be his wife," finished her father.

"No, no!" the girl's arms were about Bendelow's neck. "Don't let him come to me, papa—please don't! I've no wish to marry anybody. But if I should ever wish it—it wouldn't be he! Let me go back to America. Let me go with you. In the future, if I ever choose at all, I shall choose only from my heart. And if you said 'No,' I'd abide by your wish—I swear

it, papa! There, now, promise you'll not let *him* come to me!" Her lips pressed close and still closer to his cheek; her arms tightened about his neck.

That moment for Bendelow was supreme. In a trice he had recognized the full truth. He stood, as it were, on the ruins of all his shattered covetings; he realized their flimsiness and worthlessness; he felt himself for the first time absolutely invulnerable against every future temptation. He would grasp no more at hollow booty—feed no more by its attainment the world's immemorial curse of caste.

"My dear Evelyn," he said, very gently, after a slight pause, "I shall write to the Duke at once. And you shall go with me to America, and some day, if I am alive, and you choose worthily (as I am certain that you will do, should such a time ever come), I will 'give you away' with all the resignation I can muster. So there, now, my darling, have no farther fear!"

That night, in a certain room of a certain grand house in Belgrave Square, a pair of lemon-colored eyebrows were raised with consternation over an exceedingly polite yet firm note. The Duke never forgave. But then the dignity of dukes ought not, of course, to be rashly trifled with. Besides, he was by no means as rich, all things considered, as many people believed him. From this species of misunderstanding a large majority of dukes are apt to suffer—especially as regards their matrimonial movements.

AFTERWARD THERE WAS A CHANGE

JACK—This is a picture of a girl I used to be engaged to.

FRED—She's quite pretty.

"Well, this was taken before she jilted me."

A LITERARY LOVE AFFAIR

I LOVE her well, and yet—and yet—
 There comes the sober question
 That fills me with a vague regret
 And troubles my digestion.
 'Tis not a matter of the heart,
 But, in life's wedding weather,
 Can we, whose views are so apart,
 Live happily together?

She's beautiful and fresh and sweet
 And altogether charming;
 The instant that we chanced to meet
 My symptoms were alarming.
 Yet, if we're happy, ah! I fear
 'Twill be, indeed, a marvel—
 My favorite is Will Shakespeare,
She dotes on "Richard Carvel."

She's piquant, yet she's solid, too;
 She knows her moods and tenses;
 A witty thing that's straight and true
 She oftentimes dispenses.
 Yet all my faith seems but a sham,
 And doubts throng harum-scarum
 At thought of how I love Charles Lamb,
 While *she* loves "David Harum."

The fact is, while she's very good
 At lighter conversation,
 She has that fault of womanhood—
 She *does* lack concentration.
 I'm like an ale that's heavy blent,
 While she's a bright Martini;
 My mind on history is bent,
 While *hers* is magaziny.

Yet here's a hope I entertain—
 And may it never perish!—
 That as the years roll round again,
 And other things we cherish—
 When Cupid slowly turns us loose
 (And never even *pities*),
 We may unite on "Mother Goose"
 And other children's ditties!

TOM MASSON.

THE SOPRANO ON THE LINKS

By Guy Somerville

THERE is at Chamberlin's a certain waiter who rejoices in the fairy name of Bob. He has no other or further name, for he was born, as he hastens to explain, in Honolulu, where society is as yet in the chrysalis stage, and the tenure of surnames therefore precarious. But, in his way, he is as much of a Washingtonism as the Monument itself or the Three Old Maids of M street, and in the course of twelve years of professional practice he has learned many fearful and curious things, all of which he has duly told.

For seven years, come next December, Bob has made smooth for me my *Washington Post*, and the hands of Bob have composed my matutinal cocktail, save and excepting on those few rare mornings when, for one cause or another, as the fineness of the print or what not, I have been unable to read the *Post*, and forced, therefore, to allow a second matutinal cocktail to supply its place. During the afore-said years Bob, by virtue of his office, has made to me many communications with regard to the state of the Union; he has told me of scandals in unofficial society, scandals in the departments, scandals in the Senate, yea, even in the Executive Mansion itself; scandals, in fact, everywhere except in the House, in which body, since my membership therein, it is perhaps unnecessary to say there have been no scandals. Therefore was I not greatly astonished when he, and not Mrs. Ware or la Wassini, broke to me first the tidings of the Soprano on the Links, and the consequent impending catastrophe at the Bunstons'.

The Soprano was known in private

life as Bella Mannering, and she was one who had come up out of the land of God-Knows-Where, which is in Southern Alabama, to sing at St. Matthew's Church on pleasant Sundays. Also, she was wont to play golf at Chevy Chase, and she was very fair, with the fancy, fateful beauty of the pard. Many times, forgetful of his duties as Ambassador of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, Sir Wilfrid Bunston had gone over the links with her, a caddy, and content apparent; and many times, it was whispered, had this twain seen the Pleiades rising through the mellow shade. Which, it might seem, was a matter wholly for this twain, concerning not the club, neither the market-place, nor yet the vulgar throng; and least of all did it concern Lady Bunston. For, as Sir Wilfrid says, women should never meddle with matters pertaining to the public weal—and was he not the Queen's Ambassador?

Yet this I had from Bob in all good sooth, that a separation had been arranged, and would shortly take place, between Sir Wilfrid Bunston, of Rawley, in the County of Herts, brewer, and Ophelia Bradford, his wife, only daughter of the late Sir Marbury Bradford, of the Towers, Moak Abbey, Wicksire.

Across the way in the Shoreham two maidens had been lunching late, and these took me in their train, as I came forth, dazed, from my symposium with Bob, and led me through the length and breadth of K street, intruding here and there; for the House sat not and the day was Saturday, and that is K Street Day. And there was pandemonium, which is a crush tea, at

the hotel of the Secretary of the Navy, and a great deal of the beauty of Washington was there, and quite all of the chivalry; and thither also (though this is included in that which has been said) the maidens went with me. Within were the wives and daughters of the Cabinet, and also of such as make cabinets for hire and reward, mingling together with the happy, superficial suggestion of social equality which is the spirit of Washington, and which the unsmart love the more because they know that it is superficial. And there were also others, great men of battle, men of scars and wounds, who had come up thither out of Mesopotamia, and parts even more remote, but immediately and directly they came up out of the Army and Navy Club at the corner of Connecticut and I; and these stood in line, as heroes will, in the place where a punch was most likely to be received, and they tasted, and saw that it was good. And here I broke from my angel guides and threaded my path through the crush even to the other side of the punch bowl, in order that I might sit at the feet of Madame Wassini, who was in that place, and tell her of the trouble that was in me.

"Sibley," said la Wassini, "this is *not* a game of tag!"

"True," said I, "and yet you have said it. Let us now have the formal conversation, because afterward I am going to say something serious. Do you like teas?"

"Not when you do the teasing," said la Wassini, idly. "And as for standing in line beside our hostess and shaking hands with the entire Northeast, I would rather put five hundred in the plate to-morrow morning. I am not generous by nature, but it is more blessed to give than to receive. That's in the Bible, or somewhere."

"You don't seem at all curious," I said, somewhat piqued, "to know what I am going to say that is serious. You are a frivolous woman."

"When one has been proposed to a sufficient number of times, the mere prospect of another one does not cause so much fluctuation in one's heart-

beats as you seem to think proper and expectable."

"I have seen you," I retorted, happily, "when the mere prospect of another one has made you quite ill—physically ill—and on a public deck. Do you remember the sinuous, slimy motion on that P. & O. boat, when you couldn't take even a brandy, and De Maurepac insisted on proffering absinthe?"

La Wassini shuddered.

"I think," said she, "that it is now time for you to say the something serious. In *opéra comique* you are anything but a star."

"To be Sirius," I said, thoughtfully, "is to be the dog star."

"An enviable position," said la Wassini, "in a room so full of cats," and I started as I saw that Mrs. Wilton Wichins had come in.

When la Wassini says "cats" in that tone I always look, instinctively, for Mrs. Wilton Wichins.

"Do you know," I said, abruptly, "that the Bunstons are giving something on the third?"

"Yes," said she. "It is the third, I know, because I regretted. I am dining at the Worthinghouse's, and it is to be a 'Quo Vadis' feast, with purple music and drowsy roses. Also a fountain which sprays the back of your neck with myrrh. And, as usual, *Clicquot* in goblets. I always use tankards."

"No wonder the Worthinghouse uses goblets," said I. "She doesn't wish to be a *second* Mrs. Tanqueray. Let me ask you, further, if you know that the third is the last thing which the Bunstons will ever give?"

"No," said la Wassini, with interest. "Is it really? Has Sir Wilfrid been drinking again? And who told you, and why hasn't it been reported to me before?"

"Bob told me," said I. "Some member of the household must have supped at Chamberlin's in times still modern, and supped not wisely," and I smiled as I thought of Lady Bunston's very French, very simpering, very obvious maid.

"I know of whom you are think-

ing," said la Wassini, quickly. "She is a fluffy little thing, and quite useless, professionally. I never knew why Mr. Ware persisted in calling her his little Battle of Mont St. Jean."

"Why, because he thinks she is a triumph of arms," I answered. "But it would be more correct to call her Braddock's Retreat. She is really a triumph of—"

"I don't think," said la Wassini, rapidly, "that it is worth while for you to go into your reasons for thinking she ought to be called Braddock's Retreat."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I wish you would realize what it means," said I. "If they separate, it means that he will go home. That means that the Austrians will become the leaders of the Diplomatic set again, and we shall have to drink Oefner Adelsberger and what not at dinners. The Bunstons have given the prettiest things in town ever since they have been here, from cotillions to slumming parties; and if we lose them it will be a national calamity."

"I see," said la Wassini, naïvely, "that you remember the dinner they gave on Washington's Birthday. At this late date perhaps you do not remember quite all—but you wrote a sonnet to the second *entrée*."

"It may be," I said, imperturbably. "It was a jolly good *entrée*. Wasn't it a purée of oyster crabs? Fancy getting that at the Stengelmüllers'."

"They mustn't separate," said la Wassini, laughing.

I made a preliminary flourish with my hat.

"Till this evening, then," I said. "You'll be at the Horse Show, of course? I am going to bring Durfee and Phillips to your box—Phillips's wife is away, and he is playing. And I may bring Ware; isn't that good of me? Sometimes I think you and he both ought to be Ware. And—and I wish I could do something about the Bunstons."

La Wassini turned to Prince Blatapski, who had come for her. I wish Blatapski would stay with his wife;

though that is cruel, and she has never done me any wrong.

"Yes," said la Wassini, a trifle wearily. "I wish you kindly would. I'll see you about it later."

II

I SAID to Blatapski, as we rolled together in a herdic to the Bunstons' dance—it is always a herdic when Blatapski treats:

"I wonder if they'll show it, either of them, about the eyes?"

For Blatapski was of the few who were on the inside of things; la Wassini had told him.

He grunted.

"So long as they don't show it about the salad," said Blatapski, who is a gross man and a carnal, "there is much to be thankful for."

I lounged, luxurious, in the cushions. There *are* cushions, even in a herdic; and feeling luxurious is merely a question of habit.

"Of course, Frank Anding leads the cotillion," I said. "They might have asked Wallace, or Nesbitt, or me, considering it's the last affair."

"They might even have asked me," grumbled the Prince. "I sent ten pounds of the best candy to that shrine at Easter, and as for flowers—well, Lady Bunston herself says I have sent her flowers *ad libidinem*."

I roared convulsively.

"Dear lady!" I gasped. "It is true that her Latin is a little weak. Not that I doubt for a moment that she happened on the truth."

"She happened on a Friday," said Blatapski, *sans peur et sans reproche*. "It's beastly unlucky. The result is, as you see, that she has lost all save honor; and, at a ball, how much is honor, anyway? You needn't be shocked, Sibley—you've made many a worse one; and you have yourself called my attention to the Vs in her evening gowns. And the Princess was present when you did it."

Blatapski always calls his wife "the Princess." It sounds majestic. It is a pity that you meet the Princess af-

terward. After that it never sounds quite the same.

"See," said I, looking out of the window, "there's Potiphar, the best coolie that ever owned and operated a large embassy with its appurtenances. I hope he'll let us in, though I'm not sure about you, if you haven't your card. Everybody has come."

Potiphar grinned delightedly.

"Everybody has *just* come, sir," he said, his faultless cockney contrasting oddly with his black face and woolly hair. Potiphar was brought up in Piccadilly, W. "You will find the Scotch whiskey on the next landing, sir; the next landing, to the left."

"Thank you," I said. "I will stop there just long enough to leave my coat."

"It's a bad coat to get off," said Blatapski,⁹ ponderously, and we entered the arena together.

It was a long night and a roystering, and there was not that gentle air of church for which gatherings at a British Embassy are usually remarkable. But I was weary and restless, and whenever there came to me anyone who was on the inside, his face or her face seemed always to say, "This is all very well—but to-morrow we die."

Also there was there a certain May Harvey, a girl from Richmond, who is glorious to look upon—and for no other purpose, God wot, could she have been made—and she was the belle of the evening, as she is ever the belle where she goes; and this is a thing that it always stifles one to see. For the soul within this girl is as the soul of a sheep that is drugged, and the words of her vocabulary are awesome things to hear. Yet warriors and statesmen and callow youths alike kneel at her feet alway, as on this night, and worship her beauty, and reck not of the rest; and to me this is offensive, and it disgusts me. I did it once myself, and it doesn't lead to anything at all. Which is on account of her soul, as aforesaid.

I think it must have been the witching hour of four when I started for the coats, alone, and fully a quarter after when, booted and spurred, and

making for the side door of the Embassy, I ran awkwardly into Lady Bunston.

"Why, Mr. Sibley," said Lady Bunston, and she looked worn and very nearly middle-aged in the early morning, "you are going away, and you haven't said good-bye. You haven't even said that it was an awfully lovely party. And you always say that, you know."

"It was inadvertent," I stammered. "It has been an awfully lovely party. I looked for Sir Wilfrid, but he had gone up to his den. Ware told me he was comparing the respective merits of the 1888 grape and the 1889, and was not to be disturbed. And—and I looked for you, but you were showing the conservatory to the new attaché at the Russians'. He seemed to like it very much."

She laughed.

"He did," she murmured. "He said—but never mind what he said. It was something about the rarest flower of all not being kept with the other flowers, and all that. If he had been one of you Americans he would have spoiled it all; he would have hinted that I was XXXX Flour, or Somebody's Best."

"You are Somebody's Best," I said, gravely.

Her face grew suddenly dark.

"Yes," she said, wearily and bitterly, "just that. His Best—his Sunday Best—to be displayed on state occasions, such as—this. At other times— Oh! how I hate it all! *How* I hate it!"

I was sincerely startled. It is not good to become the confidant of the wife of an Ambassador, the Ambassador being, in the nominative absolute, at the head of the stairs.

"As to my inadvertence," I hastened to say, "I am always absent-minded when I am separated for long from the Wassini. I put no end of trust in her, and now she is on the sick list, and I am helpless."

"Don't put too much trust in her," said Lady Bunston. "Remember, everything about woman is more or less false."

I bowed gravely.

"That is undoubtedly true," I said.

Lady Bunston blushed angrily. I could not help it; I had looked, for the briefest possible instant, at her beautiful, ruddy hair.

"The point is," I continued, in no-wise embarrassed, "that without Wassini to spur me on I am useless, either at repartee or at supper, after four. Consequently, I am going to leave you."

"I suppose I shall have to let you go," said she. "I have used every reasonable effort to put off the fatal moment, that you, who are blind, might see. Only, do bring Wilfrid back his coat in the morning. It is his only vicuna, and it is no more like yours than a sealskin sacque."

In the confusion of the moment I pulled off a button, and to this day Lady Bunston tells me that I looked like a game of *rouge-et-noir*. Then—I do not pretend to know how it happened—there fell from a pocket somewhere a note, pink, *petite* and extraordinarily obvious. And even from where it lay upon the floor we could tell, she and I, that it was scented.

Before I could reach for it it was in Lady Bunston's hands.

I simply said: "Oh, I say—Lady Bunston!"

Without a moment's hesitation she pulled out the enclosure and read it at a glance. Then she looked at me with an amused smile.

"You couldn't guess," she said, "who wrote this note to my husband, could you?"

"Really, Lady Bunston," I said, "you put me in a most embarrassing position. I would rather not guess. I would rather go home."

She put her hand through my arm. She is a stimulating kind of woman and has her merits. I let it stay. Under ordinary circumstances I insist upon the immediate removal of the hand.

"Do you think it is so very embarrassing?" she said.

"Awfully," I murmured. "But never mind me. Pray do not consider me in the matter at all."

"Would you be willing," she said, slowly, "to do me a very great favor?"

I looked down at her, thinking of an episode in which we had both figured, not many years before, at the Columbia Theatre.

"If," said I, "you will let me choose the favor——"

Lady Bunston withdrew her hand.

"On second thought," I said, "I do not even stipulate that."

"This note," said she, coming to the point, "is signed by an intimate friend of my husband—a friend of whom I do not altogether approve. She writes to him 'Dear' and signs herself 'Ever your own Bella.' And she is coming to see him—to-night—in the private office, to give him some secret information she has discovered with regard to the fisheries. She underlines 'fisheries,' Mr. Sibley."

"I understand," said I, gently. "I think 'fisheries' ought to be underlined."

"She is coming at four," said Lady Bunston. "It is now nearly half-past. It would be a source of lasting satisfaction to me if you—if you would come up stairs with me and hear the interview about the—fisheries."

"How can we hear it?" I said. "Is it to be supposed that an interview about so delicate a subject—the fisheries is a delicate subject—will be conducted in the presence of two rank outsiders such as ourselves?"

Lady Bunston smiled inscrutably.

"There is a place in the wall," she whispered, in a confidential tone, "where the partition has become thin. It is behind the walnut cabinet, and no one can see it unless the cabinet is moved. You can stand in the smoking-room, near that place in the wall, and I think you can hear without straining. The smoking-room is next to the office, you know, Mr. Sibley."

"How did the partition become thin?" I queried, curiously.

The smile of Lady Bunston became more inscrutable still.

"I noticed it the other day," she said. "It looks as if it had been

worn away in that spot. It looks as if it might have been worn away with a knife."

I hesitated for a moment.

"If I come," I said, finally, "it is only because I believe, with all my soul, that the interview is really and truly going to be about the fisheries."

"I have always," said Lady Bunston, "been deeply concerned about your soul. Please let us go up to the smoking-room. There's nobody there."

We went up. Before I knew it the cabinet had been shifted and we were leaning, *tête-à-tête*, against the thin spot in the partition, I uneasy and she breathing hard. I coughed, expectant.

From the private office within came the voice of Sir Wilfrid Bunston, *recitative*.

"And now," said Sir Wilfrid—and I saw Lady Bunston shudder—"and now, Miss Mannering, I have that to say which, perhaps, will be heavy for us both. For the space of eleven months there has existed between us an acquaintance that has been intimate, cordial and delightful. You are—pardon me, Miss Mannering—you are a very beautiful girl, and I think your drive—when you do drive—is straighter and truer than any woman's in Washington. But above all, you are, or have been, a confidante of the Secretary of State. And when you remember that I needed to know but one fact in order to negotiate the fisheries convention, which has been my pet project for three years, and that you, Miss Mannering, have at last furnished me with that one fact, you will see an explanation of my interest in you which I hope, yet dread, to have you see.

"Miss Mannering, I am a married man. It is unnecessary for me to say that. I love my wife; I love her as I loved her in the days of our early married life. To obtain from you the one piece of information that I needed it has been necessary for me to risk, and perhaps to lose, my wife's love. I have permitted you—God forgive me!—to think that I have loved

you"—(his voice here broke, and he paused)—"and my wife knows this, and they know it at the club. They talk about it. Let me assure you that you will always occupy a very high place in my regard; but, while it may be brutal, Miss Mannering, I do not and have not loved you, and you and I must say good-bye."

His voice ceased, and, very low and subdued, there came from within the sound as of a woman sobbing. I looked furtively at Lady Bunston. She was transfigured; in that moment I could not have sworn that it was she.

Sir Wilfrid went on, in the monotonous voice of a man in hopeless pain:

"Believe me, I wish to do what is just. All is fair in diplomacy, as in war, and while I hate myself for the deception I have been obliged to put upon you, I do not think it was, ethically speaking, wrong. But—you will not take offense, Miss Mannering—you earn your own living, and you have rendered me a service than which none could have been greater. In this bag" (and it rattled in his hand) "there are one thousand guineas in gold and bank notes. You will confer one last great favor upon an old man who esteems you much if you will take this bag as a sort of recompense, however inadequate, for the hours—to me time gained, to you, perhaps, time lost—that we have been together."

In the next room someone violently upset a chair. The door of the office burst open, and a woman—the woman—tall, slender and closely veiled, ran, sobbing still as though her heart was like to break, down stairs and down the passage to the Embassy side door. And within, presumably in Sir Wilfrid's hand, the bag still rattled.

Lady Bunston turned to me.

"I am going in to him," she said, simply.

I walked ostentatiously away from the place where the partition was thin.

"Don't go," said Lady Bunston. "I want you to go in afterward, when

you hear me come out. He knows, or will know, that you were listening, too."

"Yes," said I, mechanically. "He knows, or will know, that I was listening, too. But I *said* it would be about the fisheries."

"Well," said she, with an effort, "I will take all the blame. It is a little hard—now. But the blame is mine, and I insist on taking it."

I bowed discreetly.

"I admire you too deeply," said I, "to thwart your lightest wish, Lady Bunston. Be it done unto me in this even as thou wilt."

"I do not wilt," she whispered, with a happy little laugh, a laugh that in an unofficial woman would have been a giggle. "But perhaps *you* will. There's a horrid big walnut box on that card table, with cigars in. They're either *Bock y Companias* or *Conchas Especiales*," she said, with careful Spanish and a woman's fine disregard for the difference between terms descriptive of quality and terms descriptive of size. "I'll see you before you go."

I wandered over to the walnut box and lighted a *Concha Especial*. There was in front of me a wide bay window, before which, even to Iowa Circle and beyond, there stretched Rhode Island avenue. The air-layers immediately above the asphalt still trembled with the undiffused heat of yesterday. Far away, at Iowa Circle, in front of a house I well knew, a herdic cab was turning.

I smiled softly.

"It was a deuced good thing she used a cab," said a voice, and without looking up I knew Sir Wilfrid.

"It was a bully thing," I said. "If it had been seen we should have had a fine time explaining la Wassini's chevron *or* on the panel."

"Tut, tut," said Sir Wilfrid. "A chevron *or* is about as uncommon as an oyster stew. I am not sure that the Mannerer hasn't one. But Ophelia knows the horses. Xerxes and Artaxerxes, aren't they? She tried to buy them once, and la Wassini outbid

her. God bless the woman! and how beautifully she forges."

"You ought to see her make Welsh rabbits," I began, enthusiastically, but he stopped me.

"That isn't forgery," he said; "at any rate, not in the first degree. But I saw that note, and I think it would have deceived even me. The Scotch is on the other table, Sibley."

I am not slow to take a suggestion, and my thirst was very great. I sat upon the other table for the sake of greater convenience, and my heels clicked.

"You are a devilish lucky chap," I said to Sir Wilfrid. "You bungled your part of it completely by the things you did with the bag. You let her go away without it, and you let your wife hear you tell her there were a thousand guineas in it; and I saw you pack it last night, and there was only a dollar.forty-nine. Still, it went off beautifully, and you're lucky."

He sat down wearily on the window-seat and I shoved him the carbonic. I kept the Scotch by me. It is always safer, in dealing with an English Government official, to have the moral support of the Scotch.

"I suppose," he said, musing (Sir Wilfrid looks like a hippopotamus when he muses), "I suppose I *am* remarkably lucky."

"We won't do it for you again, mind," I said, in an injured tone.

"I won't ask you," he said.

There was profound silence.

"I don't think I'll ever forget," he said, "the first time I met her. It was at the Marburys', and she was all in mauve."

I stirred restlessly in my chair.

"Oh, of course," I said, "she may have been partly in mauve. And she may not have worn any other color. But are you quite sure she was *all*—?"

"And her voice, Sibley!" he went on, with the musing air of one who chews a spiritual cud. "She is the goddess of *timbre*. She could not so much as say 'yes' without it seeming like a song."

"I can imagine," I replied, "that when she first said 'yes' it might have seemed very like a song."

"And yet," he pursued, "it was a very simple thing."

"The simplest thing of which I think I have ever heard."

He frowned.

"Oh, yes," he said; "I *am* lucky. That is beyond a reasonable doubt. Only—she was a rather sweet girl, you know. A rather sweet girl. And—of course, it's wholly irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial—but I think she loved me. And you're a beastly tank, Sibley. There are not four fingers left of that Scotch, and when I showed it to you it was quite new."

"If I were the British Ambassador," I said, quietly, "I should be particularly careful what I said next. I think I hear her excellency's dainty footfall at the bottom of the tufted stairs, and I think it is *cre-scendo*. And her sense of overhearing is preternaturally acute."

Sir Wilfrid grunted.

"If you lived with her," he said, though I held up my hand deprecatingly, "you wouldn't call it acute. You would call it chronic. As I was saying, a great weight is off my heart, and it leaves me, for the first time in years, a perfectly happy man."

Enter Lady Bunston, left centre. She paused for a moment in the doorway, as I rose with Sir Wilfrid. She is a good woman, but even in her supreme moments a little "dramatic and musical." Before me, a stranger to her hearth, she crossed and kissed him.

Outside, through the open window, one could hear Potiphar sleepily calling numbers, and the dead, dull sound of the slamming of carriage doors. The last were going.

The British Ambassador and Lady Bunston stood together in the window, and she laughed, entirely happy. Behind them the east was beginning to be gray.

"Don't go, Sibley," said Sir Wilfrid, "there isn't a soul in the house, and you might as well stay as not. You shall have the key to the jam closet and the combination of the sideboard, and if you don't care to, you needn't come down for dinner."

"I think," said Lady Bunston, softly, "that we ought to be very good to Mr. Sibley."

I twirled the Scotch idly between my finger and thumb. They have superlative Scotch at the Embassy.

"Because," she went on, "if it hadn't been for his mistake about the coat I should never have seen a certain note; and if I had never seen a certain note I should never have heard a certain declaration of independence; and without hearing that I don't think I could ever have believed in—things—again. So that—" she finished with a brilliant smile—"in a certain way, Mr. Sibley is really the *cause* of—of all this. Isn't he?"

Sir Wilfrid's face was sphinxlike as he met my eye. I reached out finally and firmly for the remaining four fingers of Scotch.

"Under a gentle Providence," I said, composedly, "I rather think that perhaps I am."

A DREAM OF BLISS

MRS. HENPECK—You used to say there wasn't another woman in the whole world like me.

HENPECK—If I were sure of it, my dear, I wouldn't hesitate to marry again.

THE KNIGHT ERRANT

By Arthur Stringer

HE rode at dusk down woodlands strange,
Where stood, all bathed in fire,
A great dark Tower, whose shadow gloomed
The Valley of Desire.

Alluring glowed that sunlit Tower,
But dark the way, and long;
And where the walls seemed pearl and gold
The gates stood doubly strong.

Earth sorrowed with its wrongs to right,
Its many deeds undone;
He saw life's myriad heights to storm,
Yet he must take this one.

We knew that castle of delight
Was death to him who knocks,
Where roses screened the granite walls
And lilies hid the locks.

We told him how ten thousand men
Had failed and fallen there.
"Her eyes," he sang, "are like the stars;
Like ripened wheat her hair!"

We laughed our laugh, for we ourselves
Of old had sought these things.
But hearkens he to any man,
The youth who fights and sings?

He, watching there each casement dark,
By dawn and dreary dusk,
Lay siege unto those mystic walls
Of lily, rose and musk.

And saw by night, from turrets dim,
Some dubious signal start;
We knew each sign, we who had sought
The fortress of her heart.

THE SMART SET

In want and hunger, gloom and cold,
His poor mad youth went past.
Lo, all ye tribe of Puny Things,
How one great love can last!

The pitying stars shone over him;
He shook his sword on high.
"Her mouth," he sang, "is like the rose,
And white her soul, say I!"

At last he beat the dark gates down,
And found his fortress lay
Four lonely walls, wherein all life
Had fallen to decay.

Each old retainer, night by night,
In silence stole from her;
And one by one her vassals died,
For all her musk and myrrh.

Starved aspirations, hopes, regrets,
From her white body stole,
And left her there, a woman dead,
And with an empty soul.

Four walls, she stood, from whence the last
Embattled rose had blown;
"I yield," she gasped, with goodly art,
"Take all that is your own!"

Beside that castle grim he wept—
We heard him, in our sleep—
"'Tis not, O God, the life I gave,
And the tares that I must reap;

"Of shattered, not of rusted sword
The godlier knight is made;
Oh, 'tis not, God, that in this fight
You broke me as a blade!

"But ah, so empty lies this Thing.
Why could she not hold out,
And, barring every portal, let
Me die—at least in doubt?"

She laughed her laugh, and swept the blood
From off her granite stair,
For down the wood a strange youth sang
"Like golden sheaves her hair."

*The pitying stars shone over him;
He shook his sword on high.
"Her mouth," he sang, "is like the rose,
"And white her soul, say I!"*

PASCAL AND MORAND

By John Regnault Ellyson

AT the age of forty M. Pascal was rosy and bald, and indeed at first sight rather comic, as one must be with a much-rounded figure and an uncommonly good-humored air. Unwedded, rich and contented, he had lived in Paris for years, but at last the commotions of the city affected his nerves, and he suddenly quit Paris for the country, where he conceived the idea of settling for life.

On his estate, a few leagues from Toulon, he had a little mansion, well open to the sun, in view of the sea and hidden on two sides by the mountains—mountains that rose like ramparts between this gentleman with useless thousands in rentals and the host of his amiable friends. Attended by two servants, he remained here alone, and flowered after the fashion of unique growths. He had just what he required—loose garments, good fare and old wines. He found his heart cooled and his mind refreshed and capable of appreciating nature and the charms of seclusion. He took short walks broken by long pauses; in going over greater distances, he always drove about at ease in his chaise; but he also frequently passed entire days in his chamber with his pet hound, dipped into books and smoked and meditated, lightly disdaining his fellows elsewhere and feeling no dread of the worst plague of the age—the arrival of letters.

After dinner, one evening, Pascal strolled as far as one of his little resting-places, and there stretched himself out at full length on the grass. Near him on this side ran a clear stream; on the other lay his dog. The scenery

was pleasing and the weather was agreeably warm. Indolent and abandoned, he listened to the sound of the waters and the hum of the insects, and caught glimpses of the stream running down through the valley and of the far color of the sea. The mountains immediately around him seemed to say:

"We make you inaccessible, monsieur, therefore be tranquil."

And he was tranquil. He digested his dinner in a delightful state of reverie that bordered on slumber. After some time his eyelids quite closed, and then it happened that his dog, not liking the extreme solitude, arose and licked his master's hand, and the touch awakened Pascal.

"Ah, indeed," said he, "I was almost napping. I dare say I have eaten too much; but what a delicious dinner, and such Burgundy! Here, my boy, up now and let us go!"

But, despite his words, Pascal remained in the same position. He fondled the dog's head languidly and communed with himself. He owned that, after all, he took no pleasure in much shifting about, and that for this reason he had really seen little or nothing of the world—though he knew Paris, of course, though he had traveled some in France, though he had once visited Spain. Surely, with him life had been wonderfully serene—no grave reverses, no accidents and, still more surprising, no maladies and no duels; nevertheless, in his time he had certainly run great hazards: had he not, in fact, escaped at least six marriages?

Yes, it was true, and the thought at once called up a crowd of misty rem-

iniscences; the ladies of his heart swept before him like shadows, and he drowsily followed the maze of petty adventures into which he had formerly plunged with something of animation; but in the middle of the third episode his energies failed and his lids drooped again over his tired eyes.

Fancy, in slumber, juggling with the same ideas, led him a wide flight from point to point and brought him, at last, back in front of his mountain mansion, and here, grouped around him, were the ladies of the past like so many breathing realities. He saw them all, the six adorable beauties, all known so well, all gay and dazzling and discreet, the pink of flesh and the pick of Paris; and these, one and all, came and welcomed him with smiles, and he heard their voices mingle in saying:

"La, monsieur, but what will the good world say?"

Then monsieur awoke and shivered.

II

ON the same evening, as soon as Pascal reached home, his servant handed him a letter that had come by post during his absence—the last thing on earth he could ever have dreamed of receiving. He grew very pale and, turning without a word, mounted the stairs. In his chamber, he fell into a chair, broke the seal and opened the letter.

PARIS, Aug. 20th, 184—.

MY DEAR PASCAL:

You cannot doubt my sentiments, my sincerity, and this is why I throw myself at your feet and implore your aid, your sympathy, your consideration.

You suppose—but no, I am not ruined. At Malaga, the manufacturing establishment in which I put half my fortune, and of which I undertook the direction, succeeds like a marvel.

No, Pascal, there is something worse than ruin before me. I am in the saddest conceivable plight, and I count on the most deplorable results.

Let me be brief. Understand, then, that after being a while in Malaga, I naturally sought some acquaintances with

whom I might pass my leisure agreeably. I was introduced soon into the house of Don Antonio Malbrosiosa. The gentleman in question has seven daughters—an unusual number even in Spain—seven demoiselles, I say, all young and fragrant and jolly as loves, and their mother, who wedded at twelve, is still young and very seductive. From time to time I was received into the intimacy of the house, and I ended by indulging in all sorts of innocent follies, provoked and charmed by the dark little Spanish beauties. Ah, well, behold me, then, your prosaic Morand, as an amorous harper, a poet, a hero—a fool with bells! Believe me, you could have heard my sighs in France!

But one day—a very evil day—there appeared at the door of my chamber the father of the nymphs, the lusty Don Antonio Malbrosiosa. For the moment I was delighted; I saluted him with infinite courtesy. He grasped my hand warmly, and, in expressing the civilities of the occasion, he was no less cordial than I; but then, seating himself and assuming the most grave, the most sombre air, he began the conversation in these words:

"Señor Morand," said he, "you have compromised my daughters, and I am determined you shall espouse one of them. I leave the choice, however, entirely with you."

Now, my friend, I can tell you I was unutterably amazed; I could not at once recover my voice. Can you fancy the situation? Do you understand me?

Well, after a few moments, we seriously argued the delicate point; there were many words and much warmth and great courtesy on both sides. Finally, as he quit the room, Don Antonio turned and said, in a peculiar tone:

"Señor, reflect! It shall be *this* or one of my daughters, and the choice I leave entirely with you."

That is about what he said, I think; that is, at least, what I distinctly remember to have heard; but, my God! what did I see? I saw under his fingers in the belt he wore the handle of a poignard, which he coolly tapped by way of emphasis.

When the door closed I breathed more freely.

You may be sure I took the precaution of making myself ready without delay. I put my affairs in charge of my chief employé, got my passport signed in all haste, and took ship that night. I reached Paris, agitated and disconcerted, but indeed thankful of being out of the clutches of the fiery Spaniard.

And yet, alas! it seems not so. This

evening I have a letter from my manager, telling me that all of Don Antonio's kinsmen have sworn vengeance; that Don Antonio has gathered from the purses of his friends a sum sufficient to follow me; that, coming to the works with the hilt of the poignard in his hand, he had demanded my place of residence; and that, in order to save his own life, my man had given the infuriated Spaniard an address—a false one. My correspondent begs me, above everything, to be on my guard in event of the early arrival of Don Antonio in Paris.

Here at your old lodgings they say you have now settled for good at your villa in the South. My dear, dear Pascal, I rely on your compassion, on your devotion. I confess I long for a place of absolute safety, and I am going to ask the hospitality of your sweet home in the mountains. At your house and with you I know I shall be screened from the persecutions of this devil incarnate.

I know you too well to doubt for an instant the nature of your reply, which, nevertheless, I await with the liveliest impatience and anxiety.

Write quickly. Adieu.

Your devoted friend,
MORAND.

Though the first lines of the letter caused some uneasiness in Pascal, the lines immediately following rather amused him and suggested sarcastic comment. From the point at which Don Antonio appeared, however, he read on eagerly, and at the concluding phrases his hands fell heavily upon his knees and a chilling tremor seized his limbs.

What had occurred in Spain he regarded as exceedingly curious, but by no means unnatural. In that Satanic land, he knew, the French were always fools. The flight of Morand, all things considered, seemed therefore wise. But what vexed and alarmed him extremely was the reckless presumption of Morand—that is to say, the idea of drawing the possible evil consequences of the Spanish combination upon a loving friend, for whom he had yet at all times protested such sincere esteem. In fact, at that moment, in the gathering twilight, the afflicted gentleman could all but see the implacable Don Antonio crossing the mountains—the coarse bandit

of Malaga, huge and rugged, with streaming hair, with daggers in his belt and athirst for blood.

But luckily Pascal had an excellent heart, in which the tenderest emotions waged a conflict with the most extravagant fears, and so it happened that, after an hour's struggle and anguish, he plucked up courage, took the destinies in his own hands and responded, though peevishly, by return post:

MY DEAR MORAND:

I have just received your letter. In what a wasp's nest you have thrust your nose! Come—yes, come by all means, but tell no one you are coming to visit me.

Yours,
PASCAL.

III

In time Morand arrived. Long and slender and very droll in person, he was still young—perhaps about thirty—brisk and gay, and often rather petulant, but a warm companion with easy manners. He embraced his friend affectionately and praised and thanked him in phrases of excessive ardor. Pascal was more than a friend; he was love's mirror, a model unparalleled, a paragon, an angel; Pascal had saved the life of Morand, and the gratitude of Morand would be as unbounded as the universe, as eternal as the stars.

"Yes, yes," repeated the host, now for the twentieth time; "yes, but I did nothing, I say; nothing. You would have done as much for me, and much more. I am happy you are here, my dear Morand."

And thereupon the traveler was led into the guest chamber, where he took a bath and changed his linen.

He soon rejoined his amiable benefactor, and they assumed their places at the table before a supper admirably prepared. Morand ate and drank with the keen relish of a young panther.

After the first glass of wine Morand experienced a transport, and cried:

"My noble Pascal, give me your hand."

"Morand, my brave friend," murmured Pascal, his eyes moistening.

Then, after a pause, he said:

"Ah, well, now tell me something of your affairs."

Morand went into details, explaining everything, and added:

"But what a sorry dish to serve among these you offer me! I'll tell you frankly, however, that I'm not yet fully reassured nor free from some secret fears."

Pascal, who had lifted a glass to his lips, set it down untouched.

"Yes, my friend, I remember you at one time traveled in Spain, but, on my word, you do not know these Spaniards. What an impulsive, what a fiery race!"

Morand ate while he talked; Pascal listened.

"Figure to yourself this Don Antonio Malbrosiosa—an athlete, armed to the teeth, sinister and splendid. How resolute, how daring—swift as the wind, more cruel than the wave! I tell you, if he once reaches France he's capable of using every conceivable means of finding me. He'll spare nothing to compass his end—such is the man! Now, do you comprehend? If you knew the Spanish character you would think as I do. So, my noble friend, my good Pascal, the service you render me no words of mine . . . Ah, but you're eating nothing!"

"No, I—I dined late."

"Really? Well, on my faith, I'm dying of hunger, and I drown my grief in this superbly colored wine. In your presence I almost forget the horror of my situation—what exquisite poultry, what a delicious supper! I congratulate you sincerely. Do you know, you've unquestionably the best cook outside of Paris. Come, then, here's to your health, my dear Pascal!"

"And here's to yours!"

Pascal drank freely, and the fumes of the wine chased away a few of his darker ideas. He began eating again and recovered a part of the time he had already lost.

"And how go things with you?" asked Morand.

"Ah, as you see. I live quietly."

"And this agrees with you?"

"Why, yes."

"So much the better," observed Morand; "so much the better."

"Marguerite—" Pascal raised his voice—"bring us a bottle of champagne."

"Good! I'm with you. Your diet is too highly seasoned for a traveler, but I find it perfection. And we are to drink champagne!"

"My roguish Morand—always the same."

"And you," questioned Morand, nodding his head maliciously, "see, now, how do you pass the time here, my rosy friend?"

"As you see . . . alone, tranquilly."

"Come, no nonsense."

"I give you my word, Morand."

"Ah, Pascal, no mystery."

"I assure you . . ."

"But you deceive me. Tell me, am I not at the house of my friend? To whom have I the honor of speaking, monsieur?"

"Morand, it is as I say."

"Pascal, you grieve me. What, not the shadow of a sentiment—never the least gracious vision here under your roof?"

"No, nothing of the kind."

"But you must be utterly wearied."

"I drink and eat, and I sleep well. I am comfortable and contented."

"My friend, if I were not sitting with you over your glasses and dishes I should call you a Hottentot, an untamed gorilla! . . . But here's the champagne. And this is Marguerite?"

"Yes."

"Marguerite, I yield you my best compliments. You can flatter yourself with being a cook such as few have—such—" added he, before he closed his lips over another savory morsel—"such as we always wish to have, indeed."

Marguerite paused for a moment and then tripped away in triumph.

"This cook of yours," said Morand, eyeing his friend mockingly, "this cook, I say—she's skilled in tricks. She's young, too; she's pretty. Have

a care, monsieur, you'll some day make a mistake."

"Oh, Morand! . . ."

"So the world goes. We see it in life—we see it in comedy."

"Bah!"

"I warn you, Pascal—be on your guard!"

IV

FOR five days the friends were inseparable. On the sixth day, Morand, with the idea of loosening the joints of his long legs, disappeared for several hours—for half the morning and half the evening—and on his return Pascal received him with a bad grace and berated him like a shrew.

"Come, now," said Morand, at length, "wrangle no more. Hereafter—be sure of it—I'll have you with me. I'll take your case in hand, keep you moving and get you in shape. You shall no longer loll here on a bench like a sack of bran; you have too much blood, too much flesh—'twill end in apoplexy. I've no wish to see you some fair day stricken here in my arms; no, you shall follow me. I say 'follow me,' for when we stroll you are constantly in the rear. I check my pace to wait for you; you instantly check yours. I stop; you also stop—always behind me. If I don't walk on immediately, you straddle the first stone you see, and, when once you sit down, you're there, indeed, puffing and panting for breath, with all the breezy air of heaven around you."

"But, Morand, I have no legs like yours."

"The more the need for movement. You must bestir yourself and get down this burden of flesh. You're much too fat, my friend, I warn you. Take my advice and follow me."

"I'll follow you hereafter," said Pascal, plaintively, thinking of the weariness of the day just ended and the long absence of his gay companion.

From that time on the friends scarcely parted. They deeply loved one another and they made life ex-

ceedingly pleasant, except for the occasional despair of Pascal on account of Morand's fever for rambling and hunting.

While sitting at supper one night Morand conceived a fine project.

"To-morrow is Sunday," said he; "there are to be festivities at the village across the way. Suppose we go?"

"But, Morand, the village you speak of is some three leagues off!"

"Ah, now, be easy! We can hitch Frigant to the cabriolet and drive. Your nag moves well; if we leave at eight o'clock we'll get there by half after nine. We can breakfast at ten, promenade, see the dancing, and then pick up dinner somewhere—of course, we'll carry some few bottles. In fact, I must see the pretty girls of the country, for, on my faith, save Marguerite's, I've not seen a petticoat for an eternity."

"Good!" cried Pascal; "what an excellent idea! Of course we'll go."

And at an early hour on the next morning, everything being ready, the two friends stepped into the cabriolet, and François, the groom, mounted on the high seat behind. Under the touch of the whip the nag showed his mettle and trotted on with uncommon speed. However, about the middle of the route, the genial comrades, who anticipated a day of such rare delights, met with an unforeseen and remarkable disaster—remarkable chiefly in being the only accident so far in the charmed life of M. Pascal. The axle snapped suddenly in the hub of the right wheel, and in a twinkling the cabriolet lunged sidewise and fell with a crash. Pascal, who held the reins, at once tumbled over on his flank and received the full shock of Morand's lean body and every point of its many angles. The horse, startled at the noise and getting a sharp jerk of the bit by the downfall of Pascal, reared first on his hind legs and then, regaining the ground, let fly his heels and scattered the dust with admirable spirit. To escape the nimble hoofs of the animal, Morand flattened himself against his friend,

whom he smothered and whom he yet flattered with hope, though he did not himself feel in the least reassured.

But the heavens were kind, for in a few seconds François, who at the first unusual quiver of the chaise had the good fortune to leap down without doing any evil, seized the bridle, and in some measure quieted the horse, so well disposed to complete the wreck already begun.

With difficulty the two friends now twisted and wormed through the interior of the cabriolet, which was tilted vertically, and under the hood—thrust violently forward—and climbed outside at last over the left edge of the footboard, the edge that was turned upward to the sky. They came out, physically, in a fair condition, except for Morand's slight scratches and Pascal's bruised arm and blackened eye. But both were covered with dust; Pascal's chapeau, too, was completely disfigured, and there was nothing left of half the skirt of Morand's frock-coat, which thus displayed at full his wonderful length of limb.

So, after the peril, they found themselves grievously embarrassed on a remote road, with a broken coach and a frightened horse, and with their apparel so disarrayed as to provoke laughter rather than sympathy. Clearly it seemed there was something to be done, and they were doing something the nature of which they could not have possibly defined, when someone approached them with an air of extreme courtesy.

The stranger was a country gentleman, with a gun in his shoulder-strap, hunting equipments and an empty game-bag.

"Messieurs," said he, "I see you have had a serious accident."

"Yes, monsieur," replied Morand, "we just escaped with our lives."

"Ah, truly, our escape was miraculous," said Pascal, whose color had faded since the disappearance of the wheel of the cabriolet.

"You've received nothing worse," questioned the stranger, "than the wound on monsieur's face?"

"Nothing — happily," answered Morand, "I thank you."

"My arm is somewhat injured," observed Pascal, "but that's all. We thank you: Could you suggest a place at which we might stop for the present?"

"Why not at my house? If you'll accept I shall feel grateful."

"Oh, monsieur," said Morand, "you are so considerate. We couldn't so far abuse your kindness."

"Monsieur—" added Pascal.

"How now, gentlemen? Why, you are surely jesting! I pray you—nay, I must insist; you cannot think I would abandon you here in such cruel embarrassment?"

"Cruel! Ah, it is well said," responded Pascal, wiping his bruised eye.

"At my house you'll soon recover from your shock. Let your servant follow us with your horse. The cabriolet may be sent for and set together later. I regret that my house is some distance from here, but we'll reach there in half an hour."

Pascal and Morand looked at one another, hesitated, renewed their excuses, but yielded finally, and the three moved on, followed by François leading the restive nag by the bridle.

"Monsieur—" said Morand, after a moment, and paused suggestively.

"Pardon me. Alphonze de Ber-teuil, at your service."

They bowed.

"We are charmed, monsieur."

"And I likewise, messieurs."

"My name is Morand—my friend here is Monsieur Pascal."

All three bowed again.

"Monsieur Pascal," said Morand, "is a neighbor of yours, but a somewhat distant neighbor."

"Yes? Let me see?—ah, you are the gentleman who purchased an estate, which—I believe they say—you only visited once in three years, and now you have definitely settled there; isn't it so?"

"Yes—true—precisely. My estate is very small and lies a league and a half from here, on the side of the mountain fronting the sea."

"Oh, I know it well; and it isn't so far, either."

"We hope," said Morand, "you'll now and then come over and smoke a cigar with us."

"And hunt, also," added Pascal, "for we are sportsmen of a kind."

"I accept gladly. You'll see that I am not ceremonious."

"We'll receive you with all the more cordiality."

"You're extremely kind, messieurs. But for the present, have you any important affair on hand? In that case, in spite of my desire to detain you, I'll place a horse and carriage at your disposal."

"None at all. I thank you," replied Morand; "we were going to the village near by to attend the festivities and divert ourselves—nothing more."

"I'm delighted. You're then with me for the day."

V

A FEW steps from the château the gentlemen caught the sound of someone singing. It was a woman's voice, fresh and very melodious.

"My daughter," observed M. de Berteuil; "she loves music and plays well."

This announcement of course surprised the friends. Pascal immediately felt as if his eye and his crushed chapeau would scarcely produce a favorable effect under the glances of mademoiselle. He removed his hat, therefore, while still in the open air and devoutly wished that he might as easily veil his blackened eye. He endeavored to hide the unseemly sight, however, by a studied turn of the head, which was anything but graceful. At the same time, Morand began moving in a side-long manner, none the less awkward, so that on entering the *salon* he might display that flank of himself covered by the remaining skirt of his coat. By these precautions they merely rendered themselves more conspicuous and farcical. Once in the *salon*, M. de Berteuil approached his wife and daughter.

"Ladies," said he, "I present Messieurs Pascal and Morand, our good neighbors, who have just been upst in their carriage on the road—an accident unpleasant for them but pleasing for us, since it gives us their society for the day."

M. de Berteuil, through abstraction or carelessness, designated Pascal as Morand and Morand as Pascal. This very simple mistake, together with the conscious oddity of the one's curtailed habit and the other's facial disfigurement, brought confusion to their already jostled wits, and so, without so much as uttering a single word, they kept bowing continually in the most irresistible manner and twisting adroitly, with the especial object of concealing the traces of their recent mishap, which, for all that, were quite perceptible.

In the meanwhile, Madame de Berteuil whispered softly some few sincere words of welcome, but mademoiselle, who was naïve and impulsive, was so exceedingly astonished by the phantom of two such injured beings, that, after restraining her emotions for a moment, she ended by laughing aloud in the faces of the gentlemen.

The peal of laughter startled everybody indescribably. M. de Berteuil, amazed and grieved, knew not what countenance to assume. His wife threw a severe glance at her child, who, not daring to leave the room, nestled on the edge of a chair and hid her rosy mouth behind the tips of her fingers, but her shoulders shook convulsively. She shivered, colored, sobbed twice and laughed again.

By the rarest fortune, Morand recovered his self-possession and undertook to improve the deplorable situation, turning for the purpose toward mademoiselle with as much assurance and grace as a man can exhibit in the absence of one skirt of his coat.

"Ah, laugh, mademoiselle, laugh," said he. "I pray you, laugh with all your heart! My friend and I—believe me, we laugh ourselves whenever we look at one another."

"Yes, mademoiselle," said Pascal, laughing, "yes, it is so, I assure you."
 "See, my friend joins you!"

These words gave an agreeable turn to affairs and put everyone at ease.

Madame de Berteuil did the honors of the house with tact and elegance. Her husband had one of his frock-coats brought down for Morand, whose figure was about the same as his own; he assisted Pascal in bathing the bruised parts of his eye with salt and water, and ordered a new white felt hunting-cap to be set in the place of Pascal's lamentable chapeau. Mademoiselle, too, in hopes of making amends for her fault, was extremely gracious to the guests, who could not but be alive to the attentions of one so charming in many ways.

The morning seemed short. The hours glided by delightfully. In the afternoon, while Madame de Berteuil remained indoors, preparing for the reception of some persons of the neighborhood invited to dinner, Pascal and Morand strolled with Monsieur and Mademoiselle de Berteuil.

Beautiful, amiable and merry, mademoiselle was also artless in all things save in the matter of costume, in which she showed perfect taste and some coquetry. She was slender and tall, with a clear complexion just tinted by the sun, with brown eyes, dark hair, a frank glance and a wonderfully sweet expression. During the promenade, it scarcely need be said that Pascal and Morand talked with mademoiselle more than with M. de Berteuil; both the friends, indeed, were very singularly bewitched.

On their return they found that the new guests had arrived.

At the hour for dinner, mademoiselle, who had disappeared for a time, entered the *salon* in a simple yet ravishing toilet. Pascal was in ecstacy. Morand, who in his transports always expressed himself by gesture and word, could not at the sight restrain himself from saying to M. de Berteuil:

"How happy you are, monsieur, how happy in having a daughter like mademoiselle?"

"Believe me, monsieur," responded

the father, clasping the extended hand, "you touch the weak point in my heart. I have only this child. She is the joy, the jewel of my life—her caresses, her glances, her mirth give me back the new blood and freshness of my youth."

At the table Pascal and Morand were honored by being seated on either side of mademoiselle, and mademoiselle was adorable. They hung upon her sayings, upon her smiles; they chatted and jested and breathed an atmosphere of indefinable charm.

The table at which the company assembled was well arranged. The dishes, without being the very daintiest, were choice and abundant. The native wines, very pure, well-nursed and magnificently colored, the two Parisians relished as much as the Bordeaux and other wines customarily served at dinner. Neither gaiety nor animation was lacking among these amiable people, thrown together without any ceremony, and possibly for that reason all the more companionable.

In the evening a dance was improvised, and all joined in the diversion. The entertainment ended at eleven, when refreshments were handed around, along with fresh punch and spiced wine.

At midnight, Pascal and Morand were rolling home in the patched cabriolet in a high state of enthusiasm and enchantment.

VI

LATE one day, some weeks after the accident, Pascal and Morand were dining and chatting about their neighbors, who had now become the prime topic for hours. The château had been frequently visited; M. de Berteuil had joined the gentlemen twice in a grand hunt; he had passed several days, too, at Pascal's, and so the friendliest intercourse had been established.

After dinner, there coming a lull in the conversation, a long silence, the companions assumed easy positions and the air of melancholy dozers.

But they did not doze; they puffed away valiantly at their cigars and wrapped themselves in clouds.

The silence was broken in a very unusual manner. Morand suddenly rose, fell back on the edge of the table, upset his chair and sank behind Pascal, in whose ear he whispered a name that had almost been forgotten. At the sound of the name Pascal looked eagerly toward the window, moaned piteously, and threw himself against Morand.

Both had caught a glimpse of the cavalier of Malaga. There, on the roadside—in fact, a few steps from the mansion—stood Don Antonio, shaggy and travel-stained, but none the less formidable, as sombre as a figure in bronze, gazing intently through the mountain defile at the distant sea.

It was a visitation of the terrible—a vision of the unexpected—and nothing more was needed to convince the friends that there would soon be the letting of much blood by means of the famous poignard. Swayed, therefore, by the worst fears, they immediately undertook to leave the *salon* without being discovered, and to gain, if possible, one of the chambers of the second floor. It happened in doing this, however, there was the necessity of crossing the vestibule, through which the staircase ran, and of passing directly before the main door, which was open.

Pascal, in spite of his flesh, mounted the steps like a cat, but Morand, with his hand on the rail, could not resist another look at Don Antonio. At that moment the pet hound pattered into the hall, sniffed the air and barked. Don Antonio turned, and Morand was observed before he could avoid the glance by even the slightest movement. Though believing himself lost, Morand sprang forward with the idea of heroically slamming the door in the face of the enemy, but in the next instant he was amazed to see Don Antonio lift his arms toward heaven, work his features convulsively and shed a stream of tears.

Perplexed beyond conception, lean-

ing against the door-frame for support, with outstretched neck and open mouth, Morand viewed the Spaniard with a very besotted air, with an astonishment that gave his features the stamp of unspeakable oddity. Under this spell he held his position until Don Antonio approached and put forth his hand, and even then he thought that perhaps all this might be but the prelude to an episode likely to be more characteristically Spanish.

Indeed, Morand behaved like a man who, just born at the age of thirty, finds himself suddenly in a world of very novel emotions and grotesque pantomime. He touched and dropped the extended hand, recovered it immediately, pressed it warmly, and listened to the sobs of the Spaniard. At last, confident that he must be dreaming, he obeyed the first impulse that arose; he conducted Don Antonio mechanically into the *salon*, made him sit down, seated himself and said nothing.

On his part, Don Antonio regarded the mute stupor of Morand as a form of indignation peculiarly French. And he sought at once, therefore, to excite his favor and awaken his sympathies. He leaned forward, laid his hand softly upon that gentleman's knee, and spoke in the tenderest accents of his native tongue.

"Oh, señor," said he, "forgive me, I beg of you. How deeply have I wronged you, but how deceived was I—how blinded by the folly of passion! It is past. I pray remember it no more. I am grieved and humbled and abashed. See! I have trampled my pride under my bleeding feet! Oh, señor, I will tell you my sorrows, and you will pardon me; you will pity me."

Morand pricked up his ears and arched his brows.

"Yes; when you had gone from Malaga," continued the Spaniard; "when my passions had cooled, when I could again see clearly, I was brought face to face with my sad condition—I saw more plainly than ever the hopeless state of my affairs. I speak to you, my friend, in candor, as

my heart speaks to my God. I confess, for a long time, indeed, I had lived—I had lived on the air I breathed and on the honor of my name.

"Ruined now and desperate, I was ready for anything—anything, señor, though it might hurry me into greater depths. At that hour a conspiracy was formed, and I threw myself into the cause, for, really, there seemed no doubt of its success—"

"And did it fail?" asked Morand.

"Alas, lamentably! The commander-general of the province, discovering our nest, ordered all to be at once arrested or shot; but we were numerous, and many escaped."

"And you—?"

"Ah, yes, I among them. Some of us, you see, being Carlist, took refuge at the French Consulate, and that night we were shipped off on board of a brig of state. On the next morning I found myself on the waters, going toward an unknown land. The ship ploughed the sea; the waves ran high. I was sickened, I was filled with nameless fears, in despair because of my unhappy fate, in tears over the destiny of those I adored."

Morand, beginning to account for the sudden advent of Don Antonio on perfectly rational grounds, heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"Señor, I thank you," said the Spaniard. "Truly, it's a sad, a very sad story, and it did not end when we landed at Toulon. For here I knew none but my comrades, the language was like the language of a strange world, and the future—I dared not so much as dwell upon the horrors of it! I was ill, I was sorely wearied. And in the slumbers of the first night there came to me no light, no hope, no consolation!"

"As the days passed I got once more upon my feet, but I was still ill; I still suffered. One by one my comrades departed for the interior of France by order of the Government. I, and I alone, had asked, had pleaded, to remain at Toulon. And why, think you, señor? Only so that I might be near the beautiful sea, and thus nearer the sweet shores of Spain.

"The hospitality I received was that of a vast prison. No, no, the authorities were not unkind—they allowed me to go about in a circle of a few leagues, but, señor, I was an exile—I was miserable. I could not make myself understood—I could not reveal the depth of my grief. I suffered bitterly, indeed. The burden of my soul stifled me—I could not utter my despair. When alone I wept, I wept continually; I wept for my wife, my children, my friends, for the soft skies of my native land. Often I looked upon the horizon—my blood flushed my cheeks—I suffocated. Oh, it was immense—this space around—the distance between man and me, the distance of manner and language and sentiment.

"I now passed the days outside the city, easing my heart with sighs, watching the blue heavens that bent toward Spain and longing for tidings that would bear me hope from home.

"Sometimes, in the mist rising before my eyes, I saw my family, my beloved ones—I saw them beggared and abandoned, forlorn and dying; yet what could I do, señor? I could not walk the waters—I could not fly. Ah, as if my voice could reach them, I spoke to them, señor; I called, I warned, I advised, I suggested. I ceased when my heart rose in my throat, and wept like a child bowed by the weight of eternal grief."

The Spaniard wiped his cheeks and added:

"Very often I took my fare for the whole day and left Toulon at dawn. I walked speedily onward as mere chance led me, plunged into the deep recesses of the mountains and rambled there like a phantom or a fool without aim, without hope. In the evening I returned, footsore and weary beyond measure. I sometimes slumbered at night—sometimes, but these slumbers— Oh, señor, you know not . . ."

"In God's name, say no more, my dear Antonio, say no more," cried Morand, rising and embracing the Spaniard. "Nay, you bruise my heart, you sadden, you oppress me. I am no less touched by your melan-

choly story than by the course affairs have taken. This day, understand me, your sorrows end; you are among those who will aid, who will protect, who will console you. My friend, with whom I here sojourn, is an angel from heaven—you shall meet him at once. Let me go and explain the events that bring you to his door. He will be more than surprised; he will be charmed. Now, my dear Don Antonio, be seated," added Morand, loosening himself from the arms of the Spaniard; "calm yourself; be seated, and pardon my absence just for one moment."

VII

In the chamber on the second floor, Pascal was encompassed by the shadows of a little Inferno. He had armed himself with a brace of pistols; but, notwithstanding this, he dallied with his fears and consumed the precious moments shivering in all his limbs. At every beat of his pulse he grew more feeble and less resolute, and at last concluded that any effort on his part would prove absurd and perilous. He had heard no noise, and he now imagined that the doom of his friend had been sealed, and that the slaying had been done with such dexterity as to have occasioned no single outcry. Filled with the horror of this conjecture, he ventured, with infinite precaution, as far as the chamber door and set his ear over the threshold. There he heard the voice of Morand and caught then the sound of hurried footsteps, and in another moment he well-nigh fainted on the bosom of his friend.

Briefly, but piquantly, Morand recounted what had occurred, but Pascal was far more bewildered than encouraged.

"You are too confident, Morand, too confiding!"

"What! You doubt, you hesitate?"

"But suppose . . ."

"Nonsense! What folly! Why, Pascal, you tremble! Come, let me unarm you. There! I tell you there's nothing about him to appall; the man

is greatly changed—no pictured Madonna, I swear, is meeker than this same Don Antonio. Come, come, let me convince you of what I say."

Pascal followed reluctantly, and they went down stairs and passed into the *salon*, where the master of the house was presented to the exile. In the person of the Spaniard he saw a man of about fifty years of age, comely and hardy, of a hot temperament, now singularly subdued, with a rather rugged but stately figure, very fine eyes and noble features, sun-browned and grief-stained. Pascal, in spite of his dread of the famous poignard, greeted the Spaniard cordially, and as soon as he regained a little more composure, he spoke his sentiments freely and with some fervor, sentiments that, interpreted by Morand, quite won the sad soul of Don Antonio.

Wine was then served, and the glasses were scarcely emptied when M. de Berteuil, coming in unannounced, received a hearty welcome. As it happened, M. de Berteuil spoke Spanish and took a profound interest in Spanish affairs, and so, when Don Antonio was introduced as a Carlist cavalier and the recent victim of a great conspiracy at Malaga, he saluted the stranger warmly, at once avowed his sympathies and begged him to relate his history.

An hour afterward Morand went out into the evening air and promenaded with the exile. As they strolled arm in arm, they talked of Malaga, of Don Antonio's home, of his wife and beautiful daughters and of the unfortunate conspiracy in detail. Don Antonio felt supremely happy alone with Morand—a man whom he had met and greeted in his own land, who had interests in Malaga, whom he had there entertained, whom he had all but murdered, and yet upon whom he could now depend and build his hopes—a man who, besides, knew so well and spoke so sweetly the language of the heart, the language of Spain. He could breathe, he could sigh, he could speak, and Morand could comprehend. Indeed, as he said, the depth of his

soul stirred, the blood kindled afresh in his veins, the skies warmed, the earth flowered and the distant sea grew luminous. More than a hundred times, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he thanked God and the good Virgin and the excellent Morand.

Morand, filled with the most generous emotions, expressed himself fraternally, affectionately. He was prodigal of kind words and cheering phrases. He gave his guest every assurance of aid and protection. He would write at once and forward orders for the relief of his family at Malaga. He had friends, too, at Madrid, and to these he would appeal; indeed, the pardon of the exile should be procured at all odds. Meanwhile, he would answer for him at Toulon and bring him to reside for the present at Pascal's, and here . . . but here the plumes of the Spaniard ruffled; this favor he must decline—he was capable, robust, active, he said with pride, and therefore, while awaiting the coming of better days, he insisted that he might be allowed to find some position in which he could at least earn the bread he ate. Morand even agreed to take that matter also in hand.

When they returned to the house they joined Pascal and M. de Berteuil. Supper was soon served, and at the table Morand and Don Antonio, who had talked and strolled for fully an hour, rivaled each other in drinking and eating for the same length of time.

That night, before leaving for home, M. de Berteuil amazed the Spaniard by saying:

"Don Antonio, I am told you are resolved upon taking service of some kind during your stay among us. If agreeable, I am going to make you my park keeper. This shall in no way, however, impair your social position. At the château, on all occasions—let it be remembered—you will be welcomed as my friend and companion. To-morrow we will all go with you and effect an understanding with the authorities at Toulon."

VIII

TIME now passed rapidly.

At the château the two friends met with much favor and esteem. M. and Mme. de Berteuil thoroughly appreciated their qualities. Mademoiselle, always naïve and gay and irresistible, looked upon the visitors as her own particular comrades, expressed delight at their arrival, chatted, promenaded with them, rallied them after their great, disastrous hunting tours, laughed at their follies and good stories, and sang for them the most bewitching melodies. Here Pascal was as sprightly as a lad of sixteen, docile, courteous, prattling, admirable and droll. He had entered the whimsical world, in which there is something vapory and celestial; he was immensely pleased; he was equally perplexed. Morand, too, had his dreams, perhaps less serene; but, be that as it may, the clouds in his brain also arose from the burnt incense in his heart.

These easy good souls had long ago imagined themselves dulled by experience; they had escaped snares, lost some few of the fictions of youth and reached the age of wisdom; they had indeed believed themselves roughened enough to pass the rest of life without being seriously touched. They had clung to this notion, and forgotten Nature, and madame the mother of humors now made game of the very honest gentlemen by bringing them in contact with the ingenuous playfulness, the amiability, the enchanting innocence of Mademoiselle de Berteuil.

Once, after a morning's visit to the château, Pascal and Morand had been strolling for an hour, but not a word had been spoken. In no wise had their mutual devotion lessened; still, somehow, for more than a month they had not communed quite freely; the whole day had sometimes passed in silence.

On this occasion they viewed their surroundings moodily, each of them preoccupied, abandoned to his reverie, warmed by his own individual ideas.

Suddenly Pascal began speaking:
 "Morand, you are saying nothing."
 "I was thinking."
 "Of what?"
 "Nothing; that is— Isn't the air charming?"
 "Delicious."
 There was then a long pause.
 "Morand, I must speak with you."
 "What do you wish, my friend?"
 "Listen."
 "Ah, well, what is it?"
 "You will now tell me something?"
 "Yes."
 "My dear Morand, what think you of Mademoiselle Sidonie?"
 "Indeed, she's an angel, Pascal."
 "Ah, isn't it so?"

Morand in reply rolled his eyes toward heaven.

"What sweetness," added Pascal, "what grace—how good she is, and how sportive, how charming!"

"Ah, yes," murmured Morand, like one breathing his last.

"In my time," continued Pascal, "I have seen many beautiful ladies, here and there, but frankly, I have never known one so faultless, so exquisitely perfect."

During a moment's silence, Morand strove to assume a pleasing countenance.

"Tell me—" repeated Pascal.

"What, my friend?"

"What do you say to this?"

"I?—why, truly, I couldn't for the life of me find words to sing the praises of mademoiselle. She has beauty, innocence, wit, charm, perfection and—all—all these combined."

Morand spoke in a tone which so completely ravished Pascal that he did not observe the moisture in the eyes of his friend.

"You find her very captivating; isn't it true, Morand?"

"Answer me, Pascal—isn't it true that you love mademoiselle?"

"My dear friend, I find her—"

"You find her as she is," interposed Morand, feverishly; "everything is said!"

"Ah, well—yes—as you say!"

Morand removed his hat so that

the keen air might cool the heat of his brow; at the same time he compressed his lips and cast a sidelong, dazed glance at his companion; then, awakening as if out of a trance, he turned slowly.

"Pascal, tell me, what do you desire?"

"Morand—"

"There, I understand—what you would say is that you wish to espouse mademoiselle. Well, then—well, if you'll have me serve as your friend in this affair, command me as you please."

"Do you think," questioned Pascal, eagerly, "that Monsieur and Madame de Berteuil will consent?"

"I am sure of it."

"How?—why? Speak, my dear friend, I beseech you, speak."

"Are you blind?" demanded Morand, petulantly. "Can't you see they have the sincerest affection for you? They know your character, your qualities, your social position, your fortune. I am fully aware of what I say. And I say again, mademoiselle is no woman—she's an angel! She has, besides, an inclination for you—at least, I've noted as much. Now, my friend," added he, wiping the wet palms of his hands with his handkerchief, "do you wish me to make the proposal?"

"Ah, above all things; and I thank you, my noble friend—I thank you, my good Morand!"

"Come, then, to-morrow I will drive there alone. I will ask for you the hand of mademoiselle, and I will bring you a happy response. If you see Frigant coming home with me at a breakneck speed, it shall be a favorable sign."

"Kill him, if need be," murmured Pascal.

"Well, the poor beast is apt to be in peril, for I am sure I shall bear you good news."

IX

MORAND, though younger than his friend, was more observant; he had clearly foreseen how it all would end.

Secretly he had suffered; he had dissimulated; the confession of Pascal, constantly expected, had proved, nevertheless, a very severe blow. At the time he had acted his part reasonably well; but on the day following he was again plunged in despair and brought face to face with the gloomiest task that could fall to one's lot.

In the afternoon he arrived at the château. He was alone, amazingly pale and attired in deep black. He concealed his embarrassment under an affected air of inflexible repose. In truth, the frigid gravity of his manner alarmed the household, and everyone at once asked questions concerning the missing companion, for the absence of Pascal was as inexplicable as the tragic presence of Morand.

With the assurance that his friend was in perfect health he seated himself with great formality; he spoke of the night's rain and the fine weather of the early morning, and gave voice to other trifles that fall from one whose brain is filled with the most serious matters.

Madame de Berteuil, scenting something extraordinary, exchanged glances with Mademoiselle Sidonie, who quickly discovered a plausible excuse and quit the *salon*.

Thereupon the guest was seized with a violent vertigo, but in spite of this he got upon his feet, fought for an appearance of calm, called up his energies and delivered himself at last in terms first modeled, doubtless, at the beginning of the Gallic era.

"Monsieur," said he, "I am charged with a mission, upon which entirely depends the well-being of my friend Pascal, who gives me the honor of asking in his name, monsieur, the hand of mademoiselle, your daughter."

At these words, M. de Berteuil arose slowly, as if smothering his emotion, and, taking the hand of the envoy, he paused for a moment, and then responded in pretty much the same style.

"Monsieur, the happiness of our

child is the chief aim of our life. We beg you, therefore, to say to our good friend Monsieur Pascal that whatever shall be her reply in this respect shall likewise be ours. Let monsieur also be assured that madame and myself deeply value the loyalty of his action and the honor of his solicitation."

Madame de Berteuil did herself the pleasure of adding some words in keeping with those of her husband, and, in the course of the conversation that followed, she even went so far in a way as to insinuate that mademoiselle was favorably impressed with the rare characteristics of the amiable Parisian.

However, Morand did not tarry long; in fact, at the first opportunity he took leave abruptly.

Indoors the atmosphere had been stifling; outside there was a keen wind blowing—a bracing wind—and here now the wheels of the cabriolet spun over the road with the speed of the wind—an exhilarating speed—and never did swift friendship with heavier heart bear sweeter tidings to a more impatient lover.

That night no one slept.

Mademoiselle, to whom the mystery of the evening had been imparted, could not rally from her surprise and vague uneasiness; in her innocent agitation, she lay awake and wondered, quite uncertain whether her heart leaped with love or alarm. M. and Mme. de Berteuil conversed until dawn. In every way, the marriage, they admitted, was desirable; Pascal had qualities which would insure the child's happiness for all days to come; there was his age—true, he was not young, and still he was not old; and his name?—his name was, in fact, not distinguished, nor was he particularly so in person; but then, while their own fortune was impaired, was his not intact?—and they concluded, after all, that these were the essentials—ample means and an affable nature.

In the warm seclusion of his chamber, Pascal was more than rejoiced; he was too much enchanted for slumber; the beauties of bygone days had faded and his mind was absorbed by the one superb vision of mademoiselle;

he breathed, he kindled, he palpitated with delight, he sighed in transports; he blessed the calm stars and the saints, and fashioned for the pleasure of his soul the most delicious, the most intoxicating sentiments. On the other hand, Morand, perversely bewitched, tossed here and there with unclosed eyes; the past was a dream, and the future?—the future would be the mere dark shadow of the dream. The poor creature of misadventure everywhere, with long limbs and an easy, excellent nature, with wit and gallantry and youth—alas, he had been imprudent in Spain, perhaps equally unwise in France.

X

AFTER receiving mademoiselle's favorable response, Pascal grew more charming and extremely prodigal. He wooed the mirror and lingered over the toilet; he laced himself and so rendered his figure more comely and his features rosier; he appeared constantly at the château, fastidiously groomed and perfumed in a degree that made his pathway odorous. He loosened the ribbons of his purse for nuptial gifts and other expenses of the kind; he had his little mansion brightened up by artists from Marseilles and filled with elegant articles from Paris; he bought a new coach and a fresh nag as Frigant's match for service during the season of his amorous career.

He lavished attentions, too, on Morand, and kept him always at his side; but notwithstanding the entreaties of Pascal, who wished his friend to remain at least until after the memorable celebration, Morand resolved on leaving. He often spoke of setting out for Malaga, where affairs had already long claimed his presence, and still, day by day, he put off his departure, so exceedingly cruel yet so needful to his repose.

Meanwhile, one evening there was a gathering at the château of M. de Berteuil. Many neighbors from far around made the occasion more brilliant than customarily, and the music was excellent. All seemed in the best

spirits, all save poor Morand, who, deep as ever in anguish, relished more than the others the pauses in conversation necessary for the enjoyment of the music, as these pauses relieved him of the effort to dissemble his feelings and to preserve a gaiety that was false and tedious.

Late on the same evening, Don Antonio, being pressed to sing some native airs, yielded at last, but requested that for the purpose the company might descend into the garden, saying that the full effect of the old Spanish songs could only be produced in the open air of night. Those present, after taking precaution against the chill atmosphere of the early Spring, issued out into the garden spaces. The remote dark masses of the mountains, the shadowy trees and the vivid stars gave touches of poetry to the scene.

The picturesque exile, putting himself at a certain distance from the rest, smote the strings of his guitar and began singing in a pathetic, rugged, deep voice.

Everyone was soon under the charm. The notes were unusual and irregular; there were two or more phrases repeated again and again at long intervals and with agreeable monotony, accompanied by unexpected and plaintive rises of the voice that ended in a sweet chord half-finished. The music, indeed, seemed like something deliciously incomplete, something wrought by caprice at random and breathed upon the air like inspiration. The listeners were captivated by the suggestive vagaries, the fantasies of sound, the tones at once wild, gracious, mournful and barbaric. The pleasure even exceeded the astonishment of the guests; they anticipated with regret the moment when the music would cease, and sincerely desired that the delight they felt might be infinitely prolonged.

None but Morand withdrew from the group—Morand, in whom the music had produced a feverish turmoil and unendurable bitterness of despair. Some had seen him enter the *salon*, and others had seen him come

out again and pass down one of the obscure paths.

These movements were afterward remembered, though scarcely regarded at the time, for the Spaniard still sang and diffused around him a spell of strange melody. Pascal, with tears in his eyes, touched the hand of Mademoiselle de Berteuil, and mademoiselle sighed.

Just then the sharp report of a pistol thrilled and amazed the group and occasioned some little alarm. As soon as the ladies could in a measure be calmed and the servants be summoned with lights, the men hastened in the direction from which the sound arose. And there, under the stars, in vague gloom illumined fitfully by weird flashes, they found Morand lying on the ground at a point where two neighboring paths crossed. They gazed on the upturned eyes, on the clouded brow, on the white, drawn features; they questioned among themselves; they spoke to him; they sought to rouse the poor gentleman; but there was no movement of the limbs and no murmur escaped his lips. The bosom was moistened with blood: the sad heart had ceased beating.

Pascal, who was never very alert, now reaching the scene, eluded the kindly arms of M. de Berteuil and Don Antonio, and sank upon his knees at the side of his friend, touched his yet warm cheeks and wept.

"Oh, Morand," cried he, "my dear Morand, I pray you speak to me—speak to me! Oh, my sweet comrade, my noble Morand!"

EPILOGUE

"I like your story exceedingly, my boy——"

"Thanks, Madonna; believe me, I am yours always, lovingly——"

"It is amusing and droll——"

"Thanks, Madonna—may I kiss your halo or your hands?"

"But really, to put it mildly, there is something lacking in the final pages. For instance, your Don Antonio, of whom so much is expected, at last does nothing, nothing that is grim, nothing that is gay——"

"Ah, Madonna, are you quite sure? Look over the matter again and think a moment. Now, doesn't the Don, indeed, do rather too much, after all? Doesn't he strike the chord that slays Morand? Doesn't he, despite himself, blindly, unknowingly, do the very thing in the end he sets out to accomplish in the beginning? Sometimes *that* happens in life, for destiny, like love, you know, delights in strange instruments."

"But Morand is so genial a fellow, so bright——"

"Of course—volatile, impressionable, swayed by every impulse, the Frenchman of such temperament, when despair comes, goes down un-faillingly and plays the nincompoop."

"Still, I don't think I should have ended it in that way——"

"Bless me, nor should I. Either of us, I dare say, might have shaped the conclusion more cleverly. If one has the selection of details he does marvels, but when dealing with facts——"

"So, then, the story isn't yours?"

"Not mine—I have simply made the record——"

"And who—why, who composed the story?"

"The good God—serenely and after his own fashion—in the mountains up from Toulon some fifty-odd years ago."



ORMSBY'S LITTLE DINNER

By Charles Stokes Wayne

ORMSBY leaned back in his deep leathern chair, and with his eyes half-closed appeared lost for a moment in meditation. Slowly he twisted his cigar between finger and thumb, and slowly he emitted clouds of fragrant smoke from between his thin lips.

"I've just been going over in my mind," he said, presently, in a voice that seemed to me unnecessarily loud, "the menu of that little dinner I've prepared for you at Sherry's. It's not what I should call elaborate, but it's appetizing—each course simply prepares the palate for the course that follows."

I noticed that the sandy-haired old gentleman who was sitting just behind Ormsby turned his head at the words and let his hand, that had been holding the file of the *Congressional Record*, drop to his lap.

"Yes," Ormsby went on, "I'm rather proud of that dinner. If I should tell you about it, it would be a better stimulant to the appetite than even a Mozambique."

"A Mozambique?" I repeated. "What, in heaven's name, is a Mozambique?"

Ormsby laughed.

"You must pardon me, my dear fellow," he said; "I forgot. How in the world should you know what a Mozambique is, seeing that you have been in Paris for the last six months, and the Mozambique is only two months old? Well, I'll tell you. The Mozambique is the finest thing in the way of a cocktail that the genius of a gourmet ever invented. It is composed of two parts cognac and one part dry calisaya, with a dash of oil of

cloves, a dash of acid phosphate and a mere soupçon of native Mozambique rum made from the manna of the island."

The old gentleman, I observed, beckoned a waiter.

"Suppose we try one," I suggested.

"No," Ormsby returned, leaning forward, "we shall not require it. After a Mozambique a man can eat anything. I have even known men to venture on a dollar *table d'hôte* and swear they enjoyed it. When I have given you the menu of to-night's dinner in detail you will understand."

He rested his cigar on an ash tray, thrust his hands deep into his trousers pockets and leaned back again in his chair.

"In the first place," he began, and his voice seemed to me to be pitched higher than ever, "we shall have neither oysters nor clams. Careful investigation, together with broad experience, has convinced me that the succulent bivalve is not the ideal preface to the ideal repast. I shall give you, instead, what is called a *canapé Lucullus*. Ah! my boy, if you have never tasted a *canapé Lucullus* you have yet to live. *Fromage Fromentin*, the yolks of plovers' eggs, white caviare prepared with the oil of hazel nuts—a combination that makes you fairly cry out for the *potage* that follows. And the *potage*! Dear me! I have seen other chefs attempt it—I have had it fairly good at Meurice's in Paris, and, strangely enough, I managed to find it passable at Claridge's in London, but there is one chef at Sherry's—one chef only, Baptiste his name is—who has mastered the art of making a *purée de capucines*—yel-

low as gold and savory as a garden of spices."

I must confess that his description seemed to me most alluring. Already my hunger was becoming insistently keen. I glanced at the sandy-haired old gentleman. The drink that he had ordered was on the table beside him, untasted. He was leaning on the arm of his chair toward Ormsby, and his hand was framing his ear, intent evidently on catching the speaker's every word.

"The fish," Ormsby was saying, "is not a fish in the true sense of the word, but sweeter far than any speckled trout that ever graced a board. You may not know it, but it is nevertheless a fact that the fin of the shark contains near its outer edge a—what shall I call it?—a filament, so to speak, tender as marrow and of incomparable flavor. It is like a *filet de sole*, but thicker and more delicately toothsome, and with a *sauce Hongroise*—ah, that sauce as Bernard makes it!—it is divine."

I remembered that Ormsby had once confessed to me that he was in love—that he possessed a mad passion for the daughter of a millionaire Senator from one of the Western States, but that the Senator, who was rather an ignoramus, was irreconcilably opposed to him. He had written me in this vein while I was living abroad, and I recalled now that he had added: "The Senator has but one vulnerable point—his God is his belly. Would that I could pierce his armor there!"

It struck me that he had probably been practicing on the Senator, for in all the years that I had known him I had never before observed this intimate knowledge of things culinary.

"For an *entrée*," he said, "I have ordered *côtelettes de pingouin en bordure, à la Rochefoucauld*. Have you ever tasted penguin cutlets?"

"No," I answered. "That pleasure is still in the future."

"And it will be a pleasure," he insisted. "They are a sort of *filet de bœuf* and green turtle steak rolled into one, with just a suggestion of the

canvasback flavor. We shall have a bottle of that rare old Burgundy, Bordeaux 1859, with the penguin cutlets; and for vegetable, celery root stewed in cocoanut milk, the most delectable combination conceivable."

I began to wonder where and how Ormsby had made his fortune. Surely such a dinner as he was describing was not within the reach of any man save one of great wealth or great extravagance.

"Then," he continued, "we shall have a *punch Baudelaire*—a *frappé* mixture of French vermouth and kummel—and after that a nice plump ptarmigan just from the Scottish moors, with a salad of young and tender oak leaves."

"Oak leaves!" I cried, in amazement.

"Certainly, oak leaves," he answered, with, I thought, some little indignation; "crushed and bruised, they are the material *par excellence* for a salad with ptarmigan. It was Richepin, the famous French gourmet, who discovered the beauty of the combination. Pray trust me, my dear boy, to give you something that will be a present delight and a future joy. The memory of this dinner will be something for you to dream of for months after."

My appetite was very keen. I was famishing, and I prayed he would hurry to a conclusion. The elderly listener was still all attention.

"There is a cheese," Ormsby added, "made by the peasants in the Black Forest from asses' milk. It is not well known here, but we are to have some of that to-night. It is called *Bruderkäse*, and is superior to any Camembert or Brie I ever tasted. Of course, I shall not insult you with an ice. If you care for sweets, which I do not recommend, I would suggest a *compote* of Pomeranian grapes and Neuchâtel figs, with a syrup made of *Bénédictine*, Muscatel and honey."

"That sounds good," I commented. "I shall be induced to try it."

Ormsby looked at his watch.

"It is twenty minutes past seven,"

he said, "and the dinner is ordered for seven-thirty. Suppose we toddle."

I was on my feet in an instant. Ormsby got up leisurely. As we passed out he greeted the sandy-haired old gentleman somewhat effusively.

"So glad to see you, Senator," he said. "I had no idea you were in New York."

"Yes," the elder replied; "I strolled in here about an hour ago. By the bye, Ormsby, do you suppose it is possible to get sharks' fins in Fulton Market? I've an idea I should like——"

"My dear Senator," Ormsby interrupted, "I'll send you some; and, if you like, I'll show your chef how to do them."

The Senator stood up and bowed his gratitude.

"Come in and see us," he added. "We're in our new house in Seventy-third street. I heard Madeleine the other day wondering what had become of you."

Ormsby's face was aglow.

"I shall be most delighted," he said.

When we were outside the club he caught me by the arm and pulled me across the street.

"This way," he said.

"But," I began, "Sherry's is——"

"Sherry's be blowed!" he cried. "I don't believe I could eat a dinner at Sherry's to-night. Let's go over to Brown's Chop House and have a grilled bone and a mug of Bass."



MAY AND JUNE

I

MAY comes, day comes,
One who was away comes;
All the earth is glad again,
Kind and fair to me.

May comes, day comes,
One who was away comes;
Set his place at hearth and board
As they used to be.

May comes, day comes,
One who was away comes;
Higher are the hills of home,
Bluer is the sea.

II

June comes, and the moon comes
Out of the curving sea,
Like a frail golden bubble,
To hang in the lilac tree.

June comes, and a croon comes
Up from the old gray sea,
But not the longed-for footstep
And the voice at the door for me.

BLISS CARMAN.

THE RENUNCIATION

SHE has closed and locked the door of her room. As she seats herself in a little uncomfortable chair, she opens the album diffidently, almost reverently.

Her gaze is full of agony as she hopelessly regards the photograph on the left; but it slowly changes to something resembling sarcasm when she looks at her own face opposite.

She carefully slips the latter out of the book and lays it face downward on the stand, murmuring: "He said *then* that it did not flatter me!"

Turning to another page, she takes out the picture of Annette, which she slips into the empty place.

"And I loved them both so!" she whispers, painfully, with a little catch in her voice.

"They should—look well—together!" she adds, as if not quite comprehending.

Suddenly she slips out the photograph on the left, sighing: "It cannot be! Not here, at least."

Picking up the card from the stand, she puts the faces together lovingly. Then she finds a bit of blue ribbon, and caressingly ties them so.

There are some tears, and a genuine heartache, as she tenderly handles the package an unnecessary number of times before placing it in the bottom of her desk.

That is all—except that five years later she finds it when addressing the announcements of her marriage to another man.

ANNA E. GUMAER.



MISS MINX

SEE little Miss Minx in her furbelows,
 Belaced and beribboned, all ruffs and bows—
 With the airs and graces,
 The lisp and grimaces
 Of a belle or coquette
 In society's set;

Mark the shrug of the shoulders and mincing gait
 Of this miniature maiden of half-past eight.

Take off the fineries! manners will mend
 With simpler garb and a doll to tend;
 When toys and childish playmates abound,
 The lady will vanish, the child be found.

ELIZABETH CRIGHTON.

THE NOOSE MATRIMONIAL

By Edgar Saltus

"MR. JONES, mem, is down stairs, and your aunt and your father. Your father, mem, he has been here three times."

It was Harriet, Marie's maid, talking vainly through the door.

Marie turned on a pillow and carefully, as though engaged in a matter of great importance, made with a hairpin little punctures in it. The room was big and bright. From without there mounted the rumble of Fifth avenue.

The puncturing of the pillow continued. There was a square, quite even, which she completed, and into which she stuck, one by one, a row of dots. In the middle she planted the hairpin, left it there and turned again.

Because of the silks with which the bed was covered it looked like a garden, and in it the girl resembled a flower, a rose chimerically fair. Her purple eyes were sultry, her scarlet mouth was moist, the red tangles of her hair made a burnous of flame, her fingers glowed and her wrists were such as those on which, in days gone by, falcons alighted and kisses fell.

She patted a yawn and interrogated a clock. It was not yet noon, but she had fancied it earlier. Pushing the silks aside, she got from the bed to the bath. Before the latter was a mirror. For a moment, the point of her tongue just visible, she looked herself up and down. Then absently, her thoughts on other things, she perfumed the water and hid herself there.

The chill aroused her. Presently, without haste, she began to dress. The ceremony was one which she always accomplished alone. The

presence of her maid annoyed her exceedingly, and, though this morning differed from all others, it was not until she had her bonnet on that she opened a door and called:

"Harriet!"

"Yes, mem." The maid entered, prim as a Puritan Sunday. "They are waiting for you, mem. Your father——"

Marie interrupted her. "Put those things in the bag and give it to Harris with the boxes. Are they packed? How do I look? Go down and tell Mr. Usher I am coming. When did my father get here? This morning?"

"Yes, mem." The woman nodded and turned.

Marie went back to the mirror. Her dress was of cloth, light violet. It had fur effects that were repeated on the bonnet. In spite of her coloring, or, perhaps, because of it, it became her. And now, as she looked, she bent forward and kissed herself in the glass.

"Good-bye, Marie."

She looked about the room. On a mantel were some photographs.

"Good-bye, everybody."

Her voice was contralto. As she spoke she smiled and showed her teeth. They were small, slightly uneven and semi-transparent.

On the stair beyond was a man. He looked as though he had seen worse days and never intended to see them again.

"I was coming for you," he began.

"I must speak to you."

Marie interrupted him as she had her maid. "I expected you last night. How do you like my hat? Have you seen Paul?"

From an adjoining room a clergyman issued. He was in full canonicals. The girl went back a step, stretched a hand, showed her teeth and the point of her tongue.

"I am Miss Mermex."

"For but a brief while now," the clergyman answered.

"This is my father," she added.

"I am just in town," Mr. Mermex announced. "I got here an hour ago from San Francisco. I——"

Marie interrupted him again. She gave him a slight shove, which he obeyed, and down the stair all three went.

In the wide hall below people straggled from the drawing-room to greet her. There was her aunt, Mrs. Metuchen, a little old frump. There was her immediate husband, Paul Usher. There was Mrs. Usher, his mother. There were the Enevers, society folk of the toppest notch. There was also Alphabet Jones, a man of polite letters.

Mrs. Usher's costume indicated mourning, Mrs. Metuchen's the Flood and Mrs. Enever's the Rue de la Paix. Marie, fair as an angel, yet, of course, much better dressed, beamed on them all.

Usher took her hand and kissed it. Had he not been a broker you would have suspected him of it. Marie, smiling still, showed again the point of her tongue. It was like a little piece of watermelon. Meanwhile, everybody was talking to her; Mrs. Metuchen very shrilly. Mrs. Usher approached, gratified her with a frosty caress, and stepped gingerly away.

"Many happy returns," Jones murmured, seductively.

"Gracious!" Mrs. Enever exclaimed. "Gracious!" she repeated, delightedly. "What a congratulation to a bride!"

"She reminds me," Mrs. Usher whispered, "of a beautiful animal. But I have found it well not to be too precipitate."

"Gracious! I should hope so!"

"Marie," began Mr. Mermex. He had got near his daughter again, but

Mrs. Enever's husband was talking to her. The girl interrupted them both.

"Suppose we go in."

The group parted. Through it, into the drawing-room, the girl passed, the clergyman following, the others at his heels. At one end, between the windows, two cushions had been placed. The clergyman got behind them, his back to the wall, and, fumbling in his skirt, produced a book. Then at once he assumed an attitude that was amiably austere.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here—" Before him the bride and groom were standing. The others, distributed as for a photograph, seemed reverently disposed. Mr. Mermex alone was restless, and, in a moment, as the opening exordium concluded with the mandate, "If any man can show just cause why these two persons may not be lawfully joined," he raised a hand, his mouth opened, something trembled on his tongue. But, save Marie, who turned, smiling still, no one noticed.

"I require and charge you both, as you will answer at the dreadful day of judgment——"

Marie had turned again. She was listening now devoutly. Into her sultry eyes there had entered an expression almost saint-like. From her moist mouth the smile had gone.

"Paul, wilt thou take this woman——"

The questions continued. At the demand, "Who giveth," Mr. Mermex made a gesture. Though vague, it sufficed. The promises were exchanged. The troth was plighted. Bride and groom knelt down and rose again.

"Those whom God hath joined," the cleric continued, and, mumbling the phrases that follow, concluded with the finishing "Amen."

"Let me congratulate you, Mrs. Usher."

Abruptly the man of God had disappeared. It was the man of the world who was speaking now. Then, extending his hand to the husband, he was about to ask for the paper

which the Bureau of Vital Statistics exacts, but Mr. Mermex gave him no time. He had the groom by the sleeve.

"I want to speak to you."

"What about?" Usher asked.

"Come from here and I'll tell you."

With a hand still on that sleeve the father led the son-in-law from the room. In a moment the clergyman rustled and vanished. Marie had seated herself, Enever on one side, Mrs. Metuchen on the other.

Across the room Mrs. Usher *mère* had also seated herself. Mrs. Enever and Jones were sharing the charm of her talk.

"It is incredible," she was announcing to both from behind a fan, "but I am not sure that anyone knows my son's wife, that anyone knows her father, either."

"Gracious!" Mrs. Enever exclaimed. "That is such an advantage, isn't it? Just look at the Menemens! When they first appeared I heard people saying, 'Shall we receive them?' In no time those very same people were asking, 'Will they receive us?'"

"It may be that I am censorious," the groom's mother continued, expansively. "It may be, though it is a fault which I try to guard against. But I am not precipitate, and that, I fear, Paul is. You will not believe me when I tell you that he has not known his wife eight weeks."

"Gracious! I thought they had made mud pies together. Perhaps they will. Matrimony, don't you think, is just full of adventure?"

"And I need not tell you," Mrs. Usher added, "how grateful I am to the dispensation of Providence which, in putting me in mourning, relieved me of asking people here to-day. So, while there is that for which I am thankful, there is also that which perturbs. Do you not agree with me, Mr. Jones?"

"Entirely, Mrs. Usher. Every silver lining has its cloud." The novelist was about to add further novelties, but Marie beckoned to him. He crossed the room.

"Where is Paul?" the girl asked.

"Playing billiards with your father, I fancy. In Latin countries it is customary for a bride to be taken aside by her mother. Here it is becoming fashionable for a father to disappear with the groom. But don't let it worry you. Disappearances are deceptive."

In the doorway a servant loomed out of livery.

"Harris," the bride called, "is the carriage here? Fetch me a cup of bouillon." She turned to the others. "It is after one. The ship sails at two. But you will all stop and lunch with my father, won't you? Mr. Jones, would you mind very much telling Paul that the carriage is here?"

"It is so unusual," said Mrs. Usher *mère*, "for young people to sail for the tropics on their wedding day. Does it not seem unusual to you, also, dear Mrs. Metuchen?"

"Gracious!" Mrs. Enever exclaimed. "When I was married I took my husband to Iceland."

The butler reappeared, preceding a footman who carried a tray, on which there were little cups.

Marie took one. So also did the dowager. As the servants were leaving, Jones, followed by Usher, reentered the room.

"Before we go, Paul, don't you want some bouillon?" Marie asked.

But either he did not hear or else he did not heed. "Mother," he said, "bring Mrs. Enever and come."

Mrs. Usher, who was drinking, lowered her cup. "We are to lunch here after you and Marie are gone."

"Marie and I are not going anywhere."

As he spoke he looked at his bride, and as he looked the cup which she held fell from her hand, spilling over her dress, and then to the floor, where it broke, musically, after the fashion of Sévres.

Her eyes followed it meditatively. When, presently, she lifted them, the front door had opened and closed. Usher had gone.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the dowager. She turned

to Mrs. Metuchen, from her to Mrs. Enever, then to Jones.

"What is the meaning of this?" she repeated. This time she addressed the girl.

Marie nodded, tried to smile, tried, perhaps, to speak. The effort, though, must have been too great. She dropped forward on her face.

Mrs. Metuchen made a dive at the girl. But almost immediately the latter straightened herself.

From without there came a ring.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Enever.

"It is like a scene in a play."

Jones blinked appreciatively. "It is better. This is real drama in real life."

"But, gracious! what do you suppose—?"

Jones, however, had no time to waste on Mrs. Enever. The groom's mother, with the air of a Gorgon, was promenading toward the door. She seemed smitten by that disease which pathology catalogues as *noli me tangere*. Her eyes were open to their widest extent, her mouth shut very tight. But Jones was not afraid.

"You'd best wait a moment, Mrs. Usher; there is a newspaper man in the hall."

But the lady herself was not afraid. Her promenade across the room continued, rigidly, almost mechanically, perhaps pleasurably. In a moment she, too, had gone.

Jones turned to the bride. Apparently now she had wholly recovered. She looked precisely as she had five minutes before, as pretty as she could stick, a Venus in her teens. Mrs. Metuchen, talking as though the tongue would fall from her mouth, was standing on one side of her. Mrs. Enever, doing her best to get a word in edgewise, was standing on the other. Though the one was old and the other young, conjointly they set her off.

Jones was not permitted to stare at her undisturbed. Enever had him by the arm.

"If you love Mammon and abhor righteousness," the latter was muttering, "and even if you don't," he in-

terrupted himself to add, "tell me what all this mystery is about."

There are men who can't say "I don't know." It sounds too flat. Jones was one of them. Pontifically, in his deepest note, he replied, "Mystery, dear boy, exists only in the dictionary. There is no such thing. But there is ignorance, and that is very fertile. The less we know the more we believe. Now, if you want a guess—" and drawing Enever nearer he whispered in his ear.

Enever shook him off. "Nonsense!" he sputtered.

"Well, perhaps," Jones, with silken sweetness, answered, "perhaps it is nonsense; but then, you see, we have been exchanging ideas."

The shot might have told, yet it lacked the time. Before it could hit, there was Mr. Mermex.

"Archibald," clucked Mrs. Metuchen, "look at your work! You have killed your daughter, you—"

Marie interrupted her. She had risen. "You might better have stayed in 'Frisco, I think. Don't you?" she added, longly. As she spoke, she smiled. "And just look at my dress! I am dripping with soup."

Brushing her father aside, leisurely, without haste, smiling still, she crossed the room and left it.

"There goes a dream in lilac," Jones confided to Enever.

"One from which Usher appears to have awaked."

"The more fool he, then."

Enever had no chance to reply. His wife sailed up to him and sailed him away.

Mrs. Metuchen had evaporated. Jones and Mr. Mermex were alone.

The latter coughed. "You are a literary man, I believe?"

"Oh, no. I write little things for the magazines. There is nothing literary in that."

To this Mr. Mermex assented, but absently. It was evident that he was sparring for wind. "At least, you are a friend of these people, a friend also of my daughter; and here I have few. Will you give me a moment?"

"The plot thickens," Jones reflected. "He is going to use me for a sewer."

"Now," Mr. Mermex continued, "when you met my daughter last Summer, did it occur to you to ask her where she had been?"

"But, my dear sir, a man of sense never asks a lady where she has been. He asks where she is going."

"No doubt. Even otherwise Marie would not have told. Explanations are not her weakness. But that is a detail. She had just left Sioux Falls."

"Ah!" In the rug which Jones had been studying abruptly understanding dawned. An entire panorama unrolled—the cat, the bag, the key to the whole situation. "Was that what you told Usher?" he asked.

Mr. Mermex nodded.

"But permit me, why, of all other moments, did you choose the one which you took?"

"Why, indeed! I had to take what I could get. I only reached here an hour ago."

"Of course. Then, too, postage is dear and telegraphing expensive; yet I can't help thinking, since the matter appears to have weighed on your conscience, that a little extravagance——"

The father coughed again. "There is the point. Marie wrote me that she was to marry Usher. I wrote her to go ahead. On the train this morning I met the beast from whom I thought she was free. He told me that he had never been served, that the divorce was invalid, that he intended to rip it up—all of which I had to tell Usher, and when I did, you saw what occurred. He reasoned, I suppose, that if Number One got at him he would be in for damages, and heavy ones, too. Don't you think so?"

"Really, the processes of Usher's reasoning exceed my powers of imagination. If your supposition be correct, certainly his commercial instinct is beautifully developed. But personally I regard it as a great mistake to neglect pleasure for business."

"Now," said Mr. Mermex, "there is a reporter out there. What shall I

say to him? There is no use keeping him waiting."

"None at all. Particularly as in all probability he enjoys it. Tell him the reverse. Tell him it is a great mistake to neglect business for pleasure."

"Quite so."

The door-bell rang again.

"There is another of them, I suppose, and that reminds me; you will stop, won't you, and have lunch with us?"

"No, thanks very much; but you might say to your daughter, with my compliments, that divorce is the mother-in-law of invention, and that I wish her again many happy returns."

"You are very thoughtful of others," a lady in lilac called from the adjoining room, "yet in the circumstances a trifle cynical, too."

Jones picked up his hat. "I dare say, but then, you see, it is in thoughtfulness of others that cynicism begins."

"Yes, indeed," said a voice from the doorway, "let us think of ourselves. There," Usher continued, as he entered where they stood, "I have been off reconnoitring. The divorce is all right. The forces centripetal and centrifugal couldn't touch it. Marie, where are you?"

From the adjoining room the bride strolled leisurely. Her eyes were pools of purple, her mouth a scarlet thread.

With a look cannibalistic in its longing to eat her, Usher added, "My dear, we have lost the boat."

The girl's moist lips, parting in a smile, disclosed the point of her tongue. "Then can't we," she inquired, with an air of innocence which was simply seraphic, "can't we manage to find a train?"

"Any port in a honeymoon," Usher answered. "Let's be off at once."

"My blessing on you both," cried Mr. Mermex.

"'Twas ever thus," said Jones. "Woman proposes and a poor devil accepts. For such is the noose matrimonial."

THE CUP OF JOY

LET us mix a cup of Joy,
That the wretched may employ,
Whom the fates have made their toy.

Who have given brain and heart
To the thankless world of art,
And from fame have won no part.

Who have labored long at thought;
Starved and toiled, and all for nought;
Sought and found not what they sought.

Let the goblet be the skull
Of a fool the wise deemed dull,
Once of madcap fancies full.

First in it we'll pour the light
Of soft dreams, and next the might
Of sweet follies of the night.

Let these be the must wherefrom,
In due time, the mettlesome
Care-destroying drink shall come.

These the liquid; next mix in
Laughter of a child of sin,
And the red of mouth and chin.

These shall give the tang thereto,
Effervescence and rich hue
That to all good wine are due.

Next into the cup we press
The wild kiss of wantonness
And the glance that says no less.

Sparkles both that give a fine
Lustre to the drink divine,
Necessary to good wine.

Next into the goblet goes
First a love-song, then a rose
Warmed upon her breast's repose.

These are last; they give due measure
Of bouquet to that we treasure—
Lift the cup and drink to Pleasure!

MADISON CAWEIN.

WHILE YOU WAIT

By Charles Newton Hood

SCENE—*The cozy breakfast-room in the home of Mr. and Mrs. RICHARD JAMES VAN CLEEF.*

Young Mr. VAN CLEEF strolls in and is considerably surprised to discover that his charming wife has preceded him, and, what is more, is placidly awaiting his arrival before ordering her own matutinal repast; such a thing being so unusual that Mr. VAN CLEEF could scarcely tell the date of its last occurrence; and, furthermore, Mrs. VAN CLEEF appears to be mildly interested in his arrival.

Mr. VAN CLEEF (in a rather perfunctory way, as he drops into his chair and selects his favorite morning newspaper from the pile by the side of his plate)—This is an unexpected pleasure.

Pretty little Mrs. VAN CLEEF only smiles in response and rings for breakfast. After the meal is well under way, and Mr. VAN CLEEF is beginning to enjoy his coffee—experiencing the odd sensation of having Mrs. VAN CLEEF pour it, instead of James, and smiling to discover that she really has forgotten how many lumps of sugar he prefers and how little cream—he is surprised, in the midst of a financial article he is reading in a paper propped up against the fruit dish, to discover that Mrs. VAN CLEEF is not partaking of food, but is regarding him with a troubled look. Mr. VAN CLEEF glances up inquiringly.

Mrs. VAN CLEEF—Dick, we've done our parts remarkably well, haven't we?

Mr. VAN CLEEF—I don't exactly understand.

Mrs. VAN CLEEF—Why, I mean,

since we talked it all over three years ago, and decided that we had both made the same mistake—that we were never intended for each other, after all, but that, being married, we'd got to make the best of it. We've acted our parts admirably to the world, so that it is doubtful if anyone really suspects that we are not still enjoying an indefinitely extended honeymoon. We have done some remarkably clever acting, for amateurs, and it seems to me that we deserve all of the "good notices" we get in the society columns.

Mr. VAN CLEEF does not respond in words, but he looks troubled.

Mrs. VAN CLEEF (as if in answer to a protest)—No, Dick, I'm not going to go over the whole story again. Don't think it! We married because I was old Emprett's only daughter—tolerably good-looking they used to say—and you were Mr. Richard James Van Cleef, son of the same, and descendant of a long line of Van Cleefs running back a good many generations without ever getting out of alignment; the best catch of the Summer of '92. The walks and talks, and dances and swims, and books and looks, and moons and spoons, and boating and tennis and all that sort of thing we enjoyed together at Oderkonsett that Summer we thought had developed a sincere and undying affection, and we were really and truly surprised when we discovered, after something over a year of constant companionship, how much we bored each other. I think we were wise, as things looked to us then, to come to the decision we did: to make the best of it; be just tolerably good

friends in private, but to keep up the romance so far as other people were concerned. As I say, we've done it very creditably. You've been very nice to me, and helped me nobly every time we have had to entertain together, and I've tried to be everything that could be expected of me except a loving and devoted companion. I've never flirted, to speak of, and they do say, Dick, that you have settled down wonderfully since you were married. It has all been done beautifully.

MR. VAN CLEEF (*with a puzzled expression*)—Well?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Be patient. Be patient. I've really got something quite important to say when I get to it; but I didn't want to—er—spring it on you too suddenly, and besides, I wanted to refresh your memory if it needed it, and get the story well in your mind.

MR. VAN CLEEF (*with an even more puzzled expression, in which is just a shade of annoyance*)—Yes; well?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Be patient. We decided, on coming to our senses, that we really didn't love each other at all. You don't love me now, do you?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Dear! Dear! What is the use of all this? What is the—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—One moment, please. I've really got quite deep reasons for it all. (*To servant.*) No, James, we don't need anything. I shall ring if we do. You see, Dick, I've got my plans all laid along a certain line, and I must follow that line or I may get mixed up. You must be very accommodating and answer every question. Now, you really don't love me at all, do you?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Why, of course, I—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Now, be honest, speak right out—square-toed, plain, commonsense, hygienic, French-toed without a patent-leather tip, I might say. You know you don't love me, and why not say so?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Well, then, I don't.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—That's right. Not the least little bit in the world?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Why, I suppose—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Come, come, be honest.

MR. VAN CLEEF (*actually grinning a little at the peculiar cross-examination*)—Well, then, not the least little bit in the world.

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*clapping her hands together ecstatically in front of her face and laughing in a way young Mr. VAN CLEEF used to think very charming indeed*)—Neither do I you, not the least little bit in the world—not the very least. You're an awfully nice fellow, and I like you about as well as I do anybody, but I don't Love you, with a large L, and you don't Love me, with a large L, and there you are. I wanted to get it all thoroughly understood before I divulged my great plan. Don't you think that, after all, we're sort of foolish?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Why, I don't know; under the circumstances—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Yes, yes. That's all right; but we're young and—nice—and all that, and, somehow, do you know, it seems to me that we ought to be privileged to fall in love if we wanted to and—

MR. VAN CLEEF (*thinking he sees a light*)—Oh, that's—

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*hastily*)—Now you're wrong, you're wrong. I haven't fallen in love with anybody, and I don't suppose that you have, but even if we wanted to, either one of us, we mustn't, and it doesn't seem as if we were being fair to ourselves.

MR. VAN CLEEF—Well?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Well, I have been looking into the matter a little, and I think that it could all be arranged very nicely and easily, and everything would be lovely. The circular says—

MR. VAN CLEEF—The circular?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you. I wrote to some lawyers in Dakota and Oklahoma, who call themselves "Divorce Specialists," and advertise "Divorces While You

Wait;" and, really, the way they put it, all you have to do to get a divorce is just to go out there and spend a few months enjoying the lovely climate and all that, and come back divorced. I think——

MR. VAN CLEEF (*excitedly*)—Do you mean to say, Mrs. Van Cleef, that you have been writing to those sharks on the subject of divorce?

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*placidly*)—Why, certainly; but, of course, not in my own name, my dear. Annette attended to that, and I had the letters come to Mrs. J. J. Jones in care of a private post-office on the other side of the city. Annette got the letters for me, but she doesn't know anything at all about what was in them. I was very particular about that.

MR. VAN CLEEF (*with a resigned gasp*)—Well, I should hope so. Go on.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Now, in this divorce business, there seems to be a great rivalry between South Dakota and Oklahoma, but the Oklahoma firm's circular is a good deal the more enticing. Listen. It says (*she reads from a circular which she takes from her pocket*): "Our newer States, in compiling their laws, have seen fit to show more liberality in the matter of obtaining divorces than may be found among the older States, whose laws on this subject were enacted at a time when ideas were less in accord with the advanced liberal thought of the present."

"As the Mohammedan devotee confidently turns his eyes toward the tomb of his beloved leader, so has Dakota been regarded as the Mecca of hope to weary companions in matrimony."

Isn't that nice? We'll be the weary companions.

"But," it says, "Dakota can no longer claim this undivided homage. In the still newer but none the less advanced Commonwealth of Oklahoma she has met a rival, and a fair comparison must show largely to the advantage of the sometime State, and, while the divorce laws are almost identical, the many physical advantages of

Oklahoma place her in the lead at once.

"Contemplate, in comparison to the storm-swept plains of Dakota, the picturesque of Oklahoma's ever varying scenery, her fertile fields and blooming prairies, fringed with beautiful groves and ribbed with many a rippling brook. Here nestles the newborn child of the Republic in all her virgin beauty, and here, almost in the centre of the Union, you may enjoy the luxuries of civilization and the rugged beauties of nature while shuffling off the unworthy partner. Here the pleasure seeker and naturalist, while waiting his or her divorce, may revel amid the delights of mountain scenery and explore the caves and cañons so lately the haunts of outlaws. Here the lover of the chase may vent his ardor in pursuit of deer, bear, antelope and mountain lion, while grouse, quail, ducks and geese are plentiful and the streams abound in fish peculiar to Western and Southern waters. The hotels are," etc., etc.

Isn't that nice? It says we have to live there only ninety days before we can get a divorce and be as free as the glorious air of Oklahoma. All we have to swear to is that we are uncongenial and incompatible, and you swear that you are a poor, neglected husband, and I'll swear that I am a poor, neglected wife, and we'll go out there for a little vacation, and you can hunt and explore and neglect me and be uncongenial and incompatible, and I'll climb mountains and fish and be incompatible and uncongenial and neglect you, and we'll have just a lovely time, and there won't be any scandal, and when we come back we'll be just good friends and make a joke of it, and you can go your way and I'll go mine, and— What do you think of it?

MR. VAN CLEEF (*looking rather grave*)—Why, I have never given the subject thought. It is easily enough arranged, evidently, and if you particularly desire it——

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Now, now; don't throw it all on me, please, Dick, just because I happened to think the plan all out. Say "we."

MR. VAN CLEEF—Well, "we," then. As I say, I haven't had a chance to think it over, but I suppose, considering the way our lives have been lived for the past few years, it would be the wisest thing to do.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, certainly; and I've never seen that Western country at all, and it would be just a lovely trip and outing for us. A sort of farewell tour, you know. When shall we start?

MR. VAN CLEEF (*entering more into the spirit of the thing*)—Why, if we're going, we might as well start to-morrow as any time. I don't suppose they have special excursion rates at regular intervals for parties seeking divorce, have they?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—I don't suppose so, but it would be an idea for the railroads, wouldn't it? Sell a round trip ticket for a fare and a third, including a coupon good for one absolute divorce.

MR. VAN CLEEF—Yes, and there could be personally conducted, special car lots of divorce-hunting couples, and we could flirt desperately on the way out and maybe come back married to somebody else.

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*gravely*)—I don't believe we'd want to associate much with other people who were looking for divorces, because they might not all be as—nice as we are, with their "grounds" taken from the Ten Commandments.

MR. VAN CLEEF—M-m-m. It won't be necessary to make any special preparations for the trip, will it?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, no, indeed. I don't suppose that we'll be going out much, and we'll be roughing it, near to nature's heart, while we're waiting. I don't suppose there's any especial divorce costume necessary.

MR. VAN CLEEF—There really ought to be. Why shouldn't divorces eventually become a regular social function, the same as swell weddings, to "accord with the advanced liberal thought of the present?"

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Yes, indeed. The society columns ought to write them up, the same as they do wed-

dings. Wouldn't this sound pleasant? (*She snatches up a paper and, holding it upside down, pretends to read.*)

"A CHARMING DIVORCE"

"Mr. and Mrs. Richard James Van Cleef were divorced yesterday morning in the presence of a small company of invited guests, the occasion being one of the most delightful absolute divorce ceremonies seen in Oklahoma this season. Justice Van Brun officiated in his usual impressive manner, his remarks and advice at the close being most felicitous. The couple were divorced standing before a magnificent floral design representing 'Liberty.' Mrs. Van Cleef wore a simple yet wonderfully becoming traveling gown of changeable green, and Mr. Van Cleef was attired in the conventional costume for morning divorces. The fair divorcée entered leaning upon the arm of her venerable attorney, but Mr. Van Cleef was entirely unattended. After receiving the congratulations of their many friends," etc.

Wouldn't that be nice? But I presume that we can get all we'll want to take in one trunk.

MR. VAN CLEEF—One trunk? Well, I guess not. We'd fight over who should have it coming back.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, that's so. I never thought of that. We'll take two small trunks, then.

MR. VAN CLEEF—As long as we are going right through Chicago, we might stop over there—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Not to get—it—the papers, you don't mean?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Oh, no; but we haven't been there since the Fair. Our honeymoon was bright and new then.

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*pensively*)—Oh, wasn't it pretty?

MR. VAN CLEEF—What, the moon?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—No, no. The Fair—the grounds, the buildings, and the water. They say nearly every vestige of it is gone now.

MR. VAN CLEEF—Like our honeymoon.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Seems a pity.

doesn't it? Do you remember how we floated around the lagoon in the gondola that night of the illumination? Wasn't it just too enchanting?

MR. VAN CLEEF—It was, it was. And we thought we were happy.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, we *were* happy!

MR. VAN CLEEF—Were we? It's so long ago. We'll go and see the place, anyway.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—I suppose we ought to divide the furnishings and other things we own in common before we go, oughtn't we?

MR. VAN CLEEF—I suppose it would be less embarrassing. Let me see, what do we own in common?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, there's the big leather chair—

MR. VAN CLEEF—Oh, yes; the chair. May I have that?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, no, Dick, I couldn't spare that. Don't you remember, we bought it together and ordered it made especially wide and easy, so that we could both sit in it together before the fire in the library. Don't you remember?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Oh, yes, I remember. I thought I'd sort of like it as a memento.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Would you? Well, of course you shall have it, but 'twill break my heart to part with it. And of course you will take your books and I shall take mine. That's easy.

MR. VAN CLEEF—And the pictures?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, dear me, dear me! We bought almost every one of them together. You choose one first.

MR. VAN CLEEF—I'll take that marine, "Break, Break, Break." That ought to be appropriate, under the circumstances.

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*with a little gasp*)—Why, Dick, that was the very first one we bought. Don't you remember, we bought it, because I liked it, of the artist himself, and you sulked because I raved over the artist's hair and eyes, and—

MR. VAN CLEEF—Yes, the con-

founded little whipper-snapper. I never could abide that sort of men.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Neither can I, but they're pretty to rave about. We almost quarreled. Do you remember?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Yes. That was the first time.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—And I cried and cried, and you didn't know what to do, and walked the floor, and by-and-by—

MR. VAN CLEEF—I went and tore your hands away from your eyes—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—And made me let you kiss the tears away.

MR. VAN CLEEF—U-m-m. Now you choose one.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—I'll take—let me see—"The Elopement."

MR. VAN CLEEF—But that's yours, anyway.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, so it is! You gave it to me on our first anniversary. How pleased I was! We were awfully happy, weren't we?

MR. VAN CLEEF—We thought we were.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, we *were*. We ought to be happy now.

MR. VAN CLEEF—We will be, as soon as the knot is untied.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—I wonder if we will?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Why, of course!

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Doesn't it seem strange?

MR. VAN CLEEF—It do so—it do so.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—What made us get tired of each other, I wonder?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Well, it was like this: The first time I came home drunk from the club you—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, Dick Van Cleef, you never came home drunk to me in your life!

MR. VAN CLEEF—Didn't I? Well, I have been neglectful, haven't I? I give it up.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—We just got tired of each other, that's all. Never mind the dividing. Let's just plan our trip.

MR. VAN CLEEF—Shall we stop at Niagara Falls?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, let's! And

go to every last place we went to when we stopped there on our wedding trip—Goat Island, and the Three Sisters, and the Whirlpool Rapids, and under the Falls, and the Cave of the Winds, and everywhere.

MR. VAN CLEEF—And we certainly ought to go to Luna Island.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Do you remember the guide telling us about the French couple who couldn't speak English, and of how he came back from Third Sister Island alone and said that his wife had fallen in, and then afterward confessed that he wanted to get rid of her and had dared her to kneel down and drink out of the rapids, and then, when she tried to do it, pushed her in?

MR. VAN CLEEF—Yes, I remember. Too bad he didn't know about Oklahoma!

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Aren't you a horrid thing!

MR. VAN CLEEF—I am, indeed. And shall we take the Great Lakes trip to Chicago again, too?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, yes, let's. We did enjoy that so, didn't we? I do love the water so! The moonlight evenings on deck and—

MR. VAN CLEEF—You probably won't sit on deck and go to sleep with your head on my shoulder, as you did on one of the said moonlight nights, will you?

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*pensively*)—You wouldn't want me to.

MR. VAN CLEEF—We used to sit there on deck in the evenings for hours without speaking a word. We could do that all right now.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Why, we were just too happy to speak; and besides, we didn't need to. When you squeezed my hand and I squeezed your hand back again, it meant everything that we could possibly say.

MR. VAN CLEEF—And now, when

we sit up there, I can box your ears and you can slap my face, and that will express everything, just the same, without a word being spoken.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, Dick, don't! Our dear, dead love ought to be sacred, and we did know, because, don't you remember, we tried it once, and when I squeezed your hand you told me exactly what I was thinking, and when you squeezed my hand back again, I told you. It was a kind of telepathy.

MR. VAN CLEEF—I wonder if it would work now?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Perhaps.

MR. VAN CLEEF (*going around behind his wife's chair and taking one of her hands in his*)—Now.

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*gently, almost timidly, pressing her husband's hand*)—Now, what am I thinking?

MR. VAN CLEEF (*promptly*)—You are thinking what a pair of fools we've been to make ourselves believe that we didn't love each other, when we really did, down in our hearts, all of the time, only we were too proud to admit it.

MRS. VAN CLEEF (*with a little gasp*)—Why, that's exactly right! Oh, Dick, do you? Do you?

MR. VAN CLEEF (*dropping on one knee beside his wife's chair and choking a little*)—Yes, darling.

MRS. VAN CLEEF—And shall we begin all over again and not want any divorce at all—while we wait?

MR. VAN CLEEF (*with his arm around his wife's waist*)—Yes, dearest. But why not take the trip, just the same?

MRS. VAN CLEEF—Oh, yes; let's take one every year at just this time—

MR. VAN CLEEF—And call them our regular annual farewell tours. We'll start to-morrow—

MRS. VAN CLEEF—With one trunk.



IN THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER

THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE OFFENSE OF CHASTELARD, SOMETIME ENVOY
TO THE COURT OF SCOTLAND

By Halliwell Sutcliffe

WHEN my master sent me forth from gay France into this drear land of Scotland to plead his suit with Mary, the Queen of Scots, I had little choice save to obey. Yet the embassy liked me not; for 'tis an ill wind that sends a man a-courting for another, if so the lady chance to be of peerless beauty, of matchless grace, and of a heart so delicate and tender that she seemeth well-nigh to caress when she means but to be civil. I had already spoken with the Queen of Scots, and had passed verses with her—she having as dainty a turn of French as any in my country—and I felt that a man must be kin to marble if he set himself to meet the Queen daily and yet keep his heart.

And so the matter fell out as I had told myself it must fall out. For I had not been the space of a week in Holyrood, after tendering my first devoirs to Her Majesty, before I was like to run clean mad for love of her. 'Twere shame, methinks, for one who is nephew to the Chevalier Bayard, that good knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, were I to write down thus bluntly that I loved the Queen, and yet make no excuse for the same. I trow that I am more master of all old chivalry and pride than to deem there was aught save hopelessness in such a passion; yet, meeting as we did, amidst such rude, unlettered company as was about the Court at Holyrood, and finding mutual sympathy and delight in reciting the poems of Brantome, or in matching our wits the one against the other in rhyme,

'twere strange if I had not oft seen the woman only, and forgotten that the royalty was more than a disfiguring mask.

Ah, well, I make no more excuse. So that I be accounted honest, if something witless in the matter, I care only to rid me of this my last confession, which shall one day rise to damn Her Majesty's enemies and mine. I loved the Queen, then, as hotly, as tenderly—ay, as purely—as if she had been less than Queen and more than friend; and she, forasmuch as courtesy and all heart-kindness were but a part of her beauty, smiled at my wit, and, looking beyond me, as it were, forgot that even loyal courtiers may hide men's hearts beneath their cloaks.

It chanced in this wise that I came near to placing Her Majesty's honor in jeopardy. I had left Holyrood after supper upon a certain night of August, with intent to visit a young countryman who had lately secured a post under the Governor of the Castle. The night was warm and moonlit, and I loitered through the town, forgetting about my friend at the Castle, and wishful, it may be, that some brawl might come across my path and give me opportunity to exchange my sick fancies touching the Queen for the more wholesome thrust and parry of lithe steel. And a brawl I found, of the hottest; for at the end of the Cannongate, hard by John Knox's house, a shrewd passage of arms was in progress betwixt a party of the Hamiltons and some followers of my young Earl of Arran. I unsheathed

my rapier as I ran and was soon in the thick of it—caring little what might be the cause at issue, nor to which side I joined myself, so only I could find a man to give me sword-play. As chance had it, I found myself fighting on Arran's side, and a right merry entertainment we furnished them withal, until at last we gave back each from the other from sheer lack of breath, and stood apart a little on either side the street and eyed each other wistfully.

Yet both sides had wounds enough to show for one evening's play, and 'tis like our next bout would have been no lengthy matter, but, just as we were breathed again, a window of the house next behind our party was flung open on the sudden, and a dour Scotch face looked out on us. 'Twas Master Knox himself, than whom there was no man in all Scotland less to my liking.

"The wicked shall flee when no man pursueth. He that liveth by the sword shall perish by the sword!" shrieked Master Knox. And then, bending his thick brows and thrusting out his lean, gray lips: "Such things have come into this realm through favor of the Scarlet Woman who calls herself the Queen. Are the terrors of hell as naught to you, that ye will alway—?"

But of truth I listened no more, for my need to slit the ribald throat of Master Knox had never been so strong upon me as to-night, and I chafed against the unwritten law that a priest should be free to spread his slanders and treasons—yea, to befoul the name of Her Majesty—and yet be asked no price. Howbeit, the fray was parted for that night; and doubtless the preacher took great praise to himself—as men of peace are wont to do—that he had quelled our passions, whereas we were ready, all of us, to abandon the quarrel before ever Master Knox thrust his rough voice between our swords.

Now, all this were not worth mentioning had it not proved the occasion of a most disastrous meeting with my Lord Moray, the Queen's half-

brother and chief adviser. For Master Knox, spying me from his window, and bearing a constant grudge against me, in that I had shown myself slow to admire his want of manners, must needs call me by name as I was going homeward with our party.

"There is one among you with whom I would fain have speech," cried Master John. "I mean the man Chastelard, whose dalliance with the Queen doth stink in all men's nostrils. Come up hither to my chamber, sir, and hearken to some godly and seasonable converse."

There was some laughter among the Hamiltons at this, and I turned me about sharply; for I longed to fix the quarrel—the Queen's quarrel and mine—upon a younger man and a better swordsman than John Knox. But none of the company would meet my eye, and I stood there, mortal sick with anger, and dismayed at the recollection of those words, "*whose dalliance with the Queen*." I had understood naught of this before, nor guessed that Her Majesty's favor toward me could be thus construed, even by so fertile a scandal-maker as holy Knox; and the thought stung me past endurance. As I stood, Knox's voice rang hard and clear once more across the moonlit street:

"Thou wearest a forward brow and an ungodly heart, young man. Come up hither, that so I may chasten thee to righteousness."

I came to myself with a start.

"Master Knox," I said, in a level voice, "one whose tongue is so prone to besmirch the fairest lady in your kingdom, and your Queen, may well hold strange views of chastening and righteousness. How know I but that a dagger thrust into the back of a man would seem to you a very righteous instrument of your Church?"

Some of the disputants in the late brawl were Catholics like myself, and these, standing about me in a ring, sent up a shout of mockery to where Master Knox's dour Protestant face scowled down upon us. The good

man fell into a fit of passion—being little used, I take it, to have his rough speech returned in kind—and forthwith he poured down on me from the window one of those frenzied harangues whereby he was wont to stir the congregation to sedition, strife and malice.

"*Gardez bien!*" called the young Earl of Arran on the sudden, which was the cry given by the housewives of Edinboro' when about to throw their slops into the street.

The preacher winced under the keen shaft of irony; and then his speech grew so immoderate, his words so foul against the Queen's honor and my own, that for shame's sake I pushed open the street door of his house and ran up the stair. Crossing to where he stood at the window, I caught him by the throat and pushed him backward; and God is my witness how much of credit is due to me that I left what breath I did within his body!

We stood regarding each other for a space, while the shouts and laughter in the street died down in token of my friends' departure.

"Well, Master Knox," I said, eyeing him steadily.

"Nay, 'tis ill," said he, striving to outstare me. "Yet of a piece is it with the rest of the wantonings which have made the Court a byword and a pool of abomination within this city. Hark ye, Master Chastelard—"

Other steps sounded on the stair, and Master Knox's servant, ushering in two visitors, stayed his master from finishing his speech. I looked at the newcomers, and they at me, and it seemed the chamber grew chilly on the sudden.

"Welcome, Lord Moray; I prithee, seat yourself," said Knox, smoothing his rough tongue as best he could.

Lord Moray declined the proffered chair and went and stood beside the hearth, half-inclining his head to me as he passed. Mr. Randolph, the English Ambassador, who had accompanied him, kept standing by the door, and all three glanced edgewise at me, as if my presence were sadly

inopportune. Seeing this, I laughed a little to myself and sat me down, and addressed myself to get full measure of enjoyment from the *contretemps*. For I have always had a keen scent for a rogue, and from the first I had read the fashion of my Lord Moray; stories were current at Court, likewise, as to the double face he showed to the Queen and to the Queen's enemies, and I had taken scant pains to hide from him how deeply I sorrowed for Her Majesty's trust in so hollow-hearted a brother and minister. That Mr. Randolph was dishonest, also, it needed only his credentials from Queen Elizabeth of England to prove, and it pleased me strangely to be here in the one room with these three dearest enemies.

"We are well met, messieurs," I laughed, "seeing that Master Knox, who was just about to preach to me—and I a Catholic!—did ever like a fair audience."

"Which haply he would have lacked in you," quoth Lord Moray, brusquely. Like Master Knox himself, it was my Lord's fashion to be rude of speech, since in this country of Scotland men measure honesty by roughness.

"Which haply he would have lacked in me. You speak truth," I went on, suavely. "But then there was more than this in hand; for I was minded to preach to Master Knox—a sermon as bitter as his own."

"Out of the sons of Belial what shall a man look to see start forth? Lewdness, and blasphemies, and mockery of the men of God!" thundered Knox.

But I meant not to let Master Knox's tongue enjoy its wonted tyranny. "Hark ye, Master Knox," I cried, "it may please these friends of yours to humor your office, but I would have you know that the Queen has those about her who will right her quarrels in their own way. Is it the men of God, then, who have the privilege to utter these blasphemies of which you speak? Is it the men of God who count it holiness to set snares, and lies, and evil talk about

the feet of a young and tender-hearted Queen?"

"Hold, sirrah!" cried Moray. His face was pale with rage, but it was no habit of his to let anger run into his sword blade—and doubtless he deemed me too little his equal in a quarrel, though I could boast no bars sinister across my coat-of-arms.

I grew cool once more.

"My Lord Moray," I said, "have you come to take this fanatic preacher's part against your sovereign? In France we are not wont to let questions as to a lady's honor go unheeded, be the questioner never so armored with Scripture. Howbeit, I am slow, it may be, to learn the customs of your country."

Lord Moray muttered somewhat beneath his breath, and the English Ambassador smiled thinly, as if he gleaned a cynic sort of pleasure from the strife. And then a thought of prudence came to me. I wondered if I were serving the Queen in the best fashion by this plain throwing down the gauntlet to her enemies; and so, wondering still, I got me out again into the street.

Yet my footsteps lagged as I walked down the Cannongate. There was somewhat afout betwixt those three whom I had left closeted in Master Knox's chamber, and mischief might be brewing. My heart is oversoft for a man's, perchance; for, as I stood in the quiet street and watched the moonlight shift across the house-fronts, a measureless pity for the Queen took hold of me. I forgot my passion, and remembered only that she stood alone among a crowd of liars—she, who was delicate as a snowflake to the sun, to feel the breath of calumny! Yet what could I do, when even our little hours of wit and song together were counted shameful?

Slowly I retraced my steps toward Master Knox's house, scarce knowing my purpose until I stood with my foot on the bottom stair, hearkening if there were any servant near to mark my return. I crept up the stair, thievishly, softly; and now I knew what it was in my heart to do. To

save my own life, to do service to any save Mary Stuart, I would have done no such violence to my honor; and never until this moment had I guessed what tenderness I bore the Queen, nor known that for her sake I could count it right and fitting to play the eavesdropper.

The door was closed of the chamber which I had lately quitted, but a second door showed half-open on the right, and into this I crept. Groping about in the darkness, I found my way to the dividing wall between the two chambers and laid my ear against it; frail the wall must have been—no more than a partition, belike—for every word came plainly from the further side.

"I would have no slaughter," Master Knox was saying. "Beat these anti-Christ—ay, trounce them soundly—but soil not your hands with blood. As the abomination of desolation are the priests and the mummors, yet shall they not continue—trounce them, my Lord Moray, trounce them, but take no man's life, how vile and Papish soever he be."

"Nay, we mean but to beat them," said Lord Moray, with a laugh. "If the Queen must needs hear mass, we will teach her that it suits not the temper of her subjects; and I warrant these soft-stepping priests of hers will not seek a second trouncing at our hands."

And so the talk wore on until I had their whole plan in the hollow of my hand. Her Majesty's priests were to be set on as they came from mass upon the morrow; it was to be given out that this was the outcome of a widespread disaffection toward the Catholic religion; and I knew, though Lord Moray said not as much, that he was to play the part of sympathizer with the Queen—to make pretense of punishing the offenders, and to protest his own zeal for the Catholic faith. So much I learned, and had in mind to get me quietly back to Holyrood, that so I might warn Her Majesty, when Moray broke up the talk and bade Master Knox good-even.

"And what of the young man, the son of Belial, named Chastelard? How long shall he pollute the air of this unrighteous Court?" said the preacher.

"That shall be my concern," answered Moray. "I have learned somewhat of his old life in France, and the Queen will listen to a clear request from me."

Knox, who could be civil on occasion—though I doubt it irked him at all times—went down the stair with his visitors, and shut and barred the house door after he had sped them down the street. He returned to the same chamber, and I could hear the gurgle of wine into a cup as he settled himself beside the hearth. Then I, too, crept softly out, making no noise until I had gained the street door. Careless then, I wrenched the bolts free of their staples, turned the key and sped out into the moonlight. A faint cry of "Thieves, thieves!" came from behind, but I heeded naught until I was safe in Holyrood once more.

My brain was in a riot. That foul treatment was in store for the priests on the morrow angered me sufficiently; but I could no way brook that the Queen should be taught by such as my Lord Moray to think ill of me. How greatly she favored him, I knew; that he had snared enough of her sisterly trust to make falsehood from his lips seem truth, I realized; yet I would rather have died by my own hand than let Her Majesty think one whit more lightly of me than my love deserved. A light matter it might have been to another man; but I had staked all on the one throw, and Mary Stuart had grown to be bread and drink to me. To be denied her favor, to be thrust out of Scotland, away from the sun and the light—nay, that was worse than death!

In this tumult of feeling I was summoned to Her Majesty's chamber, and my mind was scarce soothed by seeing Lord Moray foremost among the courtiers who stood about her chair. At the first breath I thought that he had already sped his shaft; but it was not so, for Her Majesty bade me,

with her wonted kindness, recite an ode to her before she went to her chamber for the night.

"They have wearied me with their talk of State, Monsieur Chastelard," said she, with a gay laugh; "and I will listen no more. What verses will you give me to-night?"

I named a poem of Brantome's, though I had little heart just now for reciting idle verse. But Her Majesty would none of these.

"I believe, Monsieur, that no lesser poet than yourself will content me," she declared, with the sweet half-smile that never failed to set my pulses throbbing.

"There are better verses, Your Majesty—" I began.

"That is not kind of you, Monsieur—to deny my judgment in such matters," she laughed.

I glanced at my Lord Moray, and saw the frown deepen on his face. And I think the sight of his discomfiture restored three parts of my courage, for I never rendered any verses one-half so well as these. It was a love song, and every line was full, to breaking point, of the Mary Stuart who was so far above me, and yet so close prisoned in my heart the while I sang to her. Passionate, hopeless, fierce, were the verses, and my voice seemed to shiver and ring like the string of a stricken harp.

"That is good, Monsieur," said the Queen, in the silence that followed my singing. "What pity 'tis that only the poets can love as men should love—and that, I fear, for no longer space than the length of their song!"

Again I saw Moray's face darken, and one of the courtiers turned to whisper in his neighbor's ear. And again my passion dropped like a wind that is spent, and I had room only for pity of the Queen. I, who loved her, knew that this courtesy of hers toward me, this easy, half-jesting, half-serious tone of hers, was but the rebound from her moods of anxiety and deep melancholy. Pressed on all hands by the stormiest factions that ever rent a kingdom asunder, per-

plexed by keen wishfulness to secure her subjects' happiness, goaded by the petty jealousy of her cousin of England, was Mary Stuart not like to sink the world in song when her day's work was done? Yet this was scandal to her friends, and Chastelard an upstart beggar of her bounty, because he had found grace to charm her sadness. "Poor child!" I had all but said to myself, forgetting that she was a Queen.

So musing, I fell into the back-ground, and the maids of honor began to twit me laughingly with the favor I had gained; until I answered roughly, being sick to gain a quiet moment in which to recur to my Lord Moray's temper toward myself. The chatter of the Court drifted past me; I knew that I must make one bold effort to gain the Queen's private ear, or be forever shut out from such kindly welcome as she had given me to-night. What I should say to her, or how I could find wit to forestall her trusted minister's purpose, I had no clear sense; but see her alone I must—and would.

It was a sad breach of manners, doubtless, to slip unnoticed from the room without waiting my dismissal from Her Majesty; but it was no time to stand on the order of my going, and what I had in mind to do, as a last desperate resource, was in itself a dire offense. All hung upon my gaining the first word; and Moray would of a surety choose the earliest moment that offered.

I went in and out among the passages until I reached the door of the secret stair that led to the Queen's bedchamber—a stair of whose existence I should have been unaware, had it not been for a foolish hint let drop, three nights before, by giddy Mary Beaton—one of the four maids of honor—when I danced the minuet so well to her liking that I overcame, in a measure, her discretion. I had little thought at the time that I should so soon come to need the secret; but I remembered to-night what Mary Beaton had told me of the sliding panel in the turret wall, and I was

glad, knowing that the main stairway would be guarded, of so secure a passage to Her Majesty's apartment.

It took me some minutes to find the panel, and the perilous fashion of my enterprise rendered my fingers clumsy; but the oak slid back at last beneath my touch. I pushed one foot forward cautiously, touched a rough strip of stone, and thereafter moved swiftly up the dark stair until I found a second sliding panel at the top. Another step, and I stood in the Queen's chamber, shading my eyes from the light, which, though subdued enough, seemed vivid after the darkness of the stairway.

'Tis no part of my confession, thanks be to God, to tell what thoughts held me as I stood thus in my dear lady's chamber and looked about me at the thousand little matters which bespoke her delicacy and taste. A white taper was burning in a sconce on the southern wall, and flambeaux of yellow wax lit up the niche beside the bed whereon stood the cross and image of the Holy Virgin. The bed was rich beyond imagining, with its roof of frosted cloth-of-gold, its covers of white velvet and curtains of snowy taffeta, yet neither too rich nor too chaste, methinks, for her who was named Queen of Scots and was queen of all men's hearts. Her harp hung mute on the right hand of the bed, and its jeweled frame glittered lonesomely amid the half lights of the chamber; below it were ranged fair tomes of old French and Spanish poems, and near at hand was an embroidery which she had worked during the busy hours of conference with her lords in council.

Ah, *splendeur de Dieu!* What a thing of beauty and of ugliness is the soul of a man! How the crass passion of the moment grows mazed and twined with the zeal of lofty reverence! For one bitter while I lost myself; like a rudderless ship, fast driving to the rocks, I let all thoughts of past and future go, remembering only Mary—Mary the Queen, Mary the woman. But that could not be

for long; my manhood took the helm and carried me safe to harbor; I went and knelt before the shrine, and prayed to the Virgin Mother to give my honor strength; and peace, as it were of a late escape from death, stole over me.

So rapt was I that I forgot altogether the danger which had brought me here, until I heard the soft laughter of women on the stair; and then I got to my feet and ran across the room and screened myself behind the tapestry that hid the window-niche.

"The Queen was over-sweet toward Chastelard to-night," said Mary Beaton's voice as she came into the chamber.

"Aye, marry; when Majesty stoops to favor a man, 'twere well he showed less comely," laughed her fellow.

I shrank close against the window and cursed the impulse that had brought me here. I had been beyond my senses, surely, to follow so plain a lure as my anxiety had set for me. The one thought only had held me—I must see the Queen alone. Yet what lad about the Court would have lacked wit to remember that queens came not unattended to their slumber?

The maids of honor gossiped on, of Moray and the Earl of Angus and the score of foreign princes who were hot in wooing of Her Majesty. Though I could see naught, I could hear them move about the floor, making all ready against the Queen's coming. Men have found themselves in worse case, it may be; but it seemed to me then that I was in the sorriest plight that man's malice or the disfavor of Heaven could encompass. If I declared myself, my hiding wore none save the guiltiest look; were I to remain, there could be no retreat that night, and when they came on the morrow to draw the tapestry and let the daylight enter to pay its homage to the Queen, I should still be the instrument of my lady's dishonor. Yet stay! One course there was, and that was to wait till all was quiet, and then to make my way down the secret stair as noise-

lessly as might be. The plan commended itself little to me, 'tis true, for the boards were crazy and the least footfall might awake the Queen, and cause her to summon aid; but choice I had none, and the hazard must be taken, now that I had so fondly courted this misadventure.

My heart beat painfully as I waited. Any moment Her Majesty might be here, and I condemned to listen to her confidential talk with her maidens. 'Twas sacrilege—unbearable, yet not to be escaped. All the Queen's kindness to me, all the pity of her life amongst these rude and treacherous folk, returned upon me as I waited; and I loathed myself, to think that I, of all men, might strike her the keenest blow of all.

The great bell of St. Giles's boomed the hour as I waited, and still the Queen did not come.

"She tarries shamefully," said Mary Beaton, half yawning, "and I am fain to be between sheets. What can be keeping her, think'st thou? Is Chastelard returned to her side, or—"

"Nay, I know not, save that the night wears late," answered the other. "What o'clock was that? Eleven—I wonder if the night bids fair for to-morrow's ride; the moon was rimmed with rain when last I looked at her."

"Hadst better steal a second glance at this same moon; she is kind toward all who suffer from thy sort of sickness," said her comrade—with reference, so I guessed, to the English Ambassador's wooing.

My mind was so away from the matter that I saw not where the danger lay; and it was not until I heard Mary Beaton, still laughing, cross the floor toward my window-niche that I knew my hour was come. She laid a hand on the tapestry that hid me—how I hated the slim, jeweled fingers, with the moonlight from without shining full upon them!—she drew back the heavy folds and moved forward to the window, then stopped, with a cry of terror.

"What is it?" cried her comrade.

Mary Beaton stood regarding me with wide-open eyes; one hand still held the curtain back, and it seemed that extreme fear had robbed her of the power to move. "Chastelard!" she gasped.

Her companion gave but the one glance, then ran to the door and screamed so shrilly for succor that methought there could be none within the palace walls but heard her cry. I spoke no word, but stepped into the middle of the floor, and crossed my arms and waited for the end. The Queen was already on the threshold, and had paused there, looking at me. Somewhat there was in Her Majesty's face that I could not read aright—a pity, and a tenderness warring with offended dignity. But I had scant time for reflection—or for speech, if any had come to me—since already we could hear the clamor of the startled Court below stairs.

"Sir, what means this intrusion?" said Mary the Queen, drawn to her full height of royalty, yet powerless to keep the sorrow from her eyes.

The sight of her unmanned my purpose. "Your Majesty, 'twas a good cause and an innocent that brought me here," I began.

"The proof of that would seem hard," said she, coldly.

"My Lord Moray—" I began.

But the crowd had gained the stair top by this time, and foremost of all was my Lord Moray himself, his drawn sword in his hand. A subtle joy flashed into his face and out again as he saw that the offender was Chastelard. I did not draw my weapon, but stood quietly and tried to pin my Lord's shifting glance.

Ah, *Dieu!* It needs time to write it down—but I had no time in which to form my judgment and act upon it. Swift and terrible had been the action since Mary Beaton drew back the tapestry and showed me to the eye of calumny. *What was best for the Queen?* And I knew that but one thing was left me. It was idle, in face of the suspicion that peeped at me from every eye, to tell plainly what had brought me here; the truth

would seem extreme falsehood, and the Queen's part and share in all might well be called in question. Only the one course was open, I told myself again, just as Lord Moray's rasping voice cut through the Babel of surprise.

"Gentlemen of the guard, secure this ruffian," he cried.

One last rally I made. "Lord Moray," I cried, "will you put this quarrel to the sword-test at daybreak in the palace close?"

"I will hang thee, rather, at daybreak in the palace close," cried Moray, laughing outright in my face.

The guard were close about me by this time. I could hear the startled movements of the women, and a swift glance at the Queen showed me the same helpless air of tenderness and anger and perplexity. And death seemed marvelous easy on the sudden, so only I could bring Queen Mary safe through this.

"You may secure me, messieurs," I said, and faced the company.

Lord Moray, seeing that I had something to say, essayed to close my mouth with a rough hand, fearing, doubtless, lest I should be guilty of untoward plain-spokenness. But the Queen checked him; and, indeed, he had naught to fear now from me, since a dearer honor than his own was in my keeping.

They formed a ring about me, the women still venting their accursed "Ahs!" But I saw none save Mary the Queen.

"Lest I lose heart before the end, and lie to save myself," I cried, "hear the truth from my lips. The fault is mine alone, the penalty mine."

The Queen turned half toward me; and now there was entreaty written big upon her face. But I would not budge, though it gladdened me to know that she was loath to think ill of Chastelard.

"Of my folly I loved her, and ran wild, and saw no happiness but to seek death in her chamber here, *because she scorned my suit*. Lord Moray, the game is yours; let the end come speedily."

Once, twice, the Queen made as if to interpose as they led me forth; but I laughed openly, as if rejoicing in my guilt, and left her no opportunity to hazard her reputation on a plea for mercy. I turned for a last look at her—and knew that to have seen the Queen was recompense enough for death. And then they led me out; and Moray, as I passed him, struck

me twice upon the mouth. My Lord was very brave when he had naught to fear.

That is the tale of Chastelard—Chastelard, the dreamer and the fool, who now, at the eleventh hour, is jealous only for the Queen's honor and his own. And so to my prayers, lest the scaffold find me unprepared.



THE ROSE OF MY DESIRE

O WILD, dark flower of woman,
 Deep rose of my desire,
 An Eastern wizzard made you
 Of earth and stars and fire.

When the orange moon swung low
 Over the camphor trees,
 By the silver shaft of the fountain
 He wrought his mysteries.

The hot, sweet mould of the garden
 He took from a secret place
 To become your glimmering body
 And the lure of your strange face.

From the swoon of the tropic heaven
 He drew down star on star,
 And breathed them into your soul
 That your soul might wander far—

On earth forever homeless,
 But intimate of the spheres,
 A pang in your mystic laughter,
 A portent in your tears.

From the night's heat, hushed, electric,
 He summoned a shifting flame,
 And cherished it, and blew on it
 Till it turned into your name.

And he set the name in my heart
 For an unextinguished fire,
 O wild, dark flower of woman,
 Deep rose of my desire.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

QUICK MAIL SERVICE

(METROPOLITAN)

ONE night I wrote my love a note
 (The tender words I may not quote);
 I wrote it, and I mailed it, too,
 With promptness at Sub-station Q.
 I said, in closing it, that I
 Would call next day for her reply,
 But ah, confusion, when we met—
 She hadn't got my letter yet!

That night I wrote to her papa,
 With tender greetings for mamma,
 And manfully I told them "all"
 In manner calm and logical.
 I added that I'd see them soon—
 In fact, I called next afternoon,
 When lo, I found to my regret
 They hadn't got my letter yet!

Ah, well, we married, she and I,
 And days rolled round and weeks went by,
 And oft, by "business cares" detained,
 I wrote and carefully explained
 In tender words to pave the way
 For sundry questionings next day;
 'Twas wasted effort—when we met
 She *never* had my letter yet!

So time went on, and blessings came
 To cheer my hearth and bear my name,
 And soon the family purse got low,
 With outlay swift and business slow.
 And now once more I wrote papa,
 With tender greetings for mamma.
 They haven't answered, and I'll bet
 They haven't got our letter yet!

ALBERT BIGELOW PAINE.

A NEW MALADY

O'HAGGARTY—Phwot is dhe matther wid yure Uncle Dinnis, Oi dunno?
 McGORRY—He has dhe exclamatory rheumatism. Bedad! he does
 nawthin' but holler and swear all dhe toime!

AN EYELASH FINISH

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

"YOU'VE seen fellows, other fellows, that were various and sundry sorts of a fool," Aspel said to Burrage behind his hand, "but really, now, isn't Govern the limit? Fancy spending what he does on a coach—time, money, anxious thought, lessons from the only Howlett, and all that—and then letting another fellow tool it, with Mrs. Govern on the box seat!"

"Hush!" Burrage half-whispered, "Fanny Trevor is looking our way. She's a ferret."

"Her eyes won't trouble us—she doesn't take them long enough from Govern's wife," Aspel replied.

Burrage laughed significantly.

"Remember how Govern comes to be—Govern," he said. "Philadelphia, you know, has to answer for him. I've a dowager aunt over there who tells me that until Govern *père* made his first two millions, the family were McGoverns—"

"I see; they dropped the 'Mc.' What a shame they couldn't also drop the nose!" Aspel was looking at the coach's owner, who sat supremely content beside the guard. Govern was slight and boyish-looking, with merry, Milesian blue eyes and pure red hair. The weight of even his millions did not depress him—possibly because he was too simple-minded to comprehend all their potentialities.

The Hon. Mortimer Govern, banker and statesman, sometime Murtagh McGovern, contractor and boss, had been shrewdly ambitious enough for his only son, Lawrence, to understand that the easiest way into Philadelphia's social citadels lay through New York. So as soon as the lad came well to

man's estate he had found himself magnificently established in the metropolis, ostensibly in charge of a branch of the Govern bank. His real business was to demonstrate that in every point he was at once a good fellow and a gentleman.

To satisfy the eternal unfitness of things he ought to have failed miserably, and made ducks and drakes of the Govern money and the Govern aspirations. Instead, almost in the twinkling of an eye, he fell in love with and married a young woman who had society at her feet, by virtue of her birth and blood, and, incidentally, a very handsome fortune.

Oddly enough, it was a love match on both sides. The wedding, which might have been a social event, was celebrated as quietly as possible. The bride had her own town house. The Honorable Mortimer's wedding gift was a country estate, completely appointed. But the happy couple turned their backs on both, and for two years went honeymooning, strange countries for to see.

It was even bruited that they might finally live abroad, but Fanny Trevor shook her head energetically. "I know Juliet Van Bruyn too well," she said; "she never, never does what one expects. Any other woman would be tempted to follow up all that London success. Juliet likes to surprise people. If she lost her money tomorrow she would make up to herself for it by opening a tart-shop or something, and seeing people stare."

Whether or no Fanny was right the Governs came unheralded to Newport, saw and conquered it. They took a modest cottage, and entertained mag-

nificantly. Mrs. Govern's Paris gowns were a revelation, and her traps the smartest on the Ocean Drive, yet there were times when, perversely, she whirled along in a perfectly appointed equipage wearing the very simplest of cotton frocks and dangling a gingham sunshade over her shoulder.

Delmond took her to task for it. "It makes people stare and talk," he said. "Anything that makes talk is bad form. If you are not more careful you will get into the newspapers."

"Heavens! Don't say that!" Juliet cried, with a little shudder. Her husband laughed uproariously. Delmond's audacity was refreshing—but not, after all, astonishing. Delmond could do whatever he chose. He was the man most sought after by Newport hostesses. Govern would not have been human if he had not felt flattered by Delmond's evident preference for Fir Cottage. Delmond lived nominally aboard his yacht, the *Melitta*; actually, he spent three nights in five with the Governs.

He was unquestionably fond of Lawrence. Juliet he had known always. "Fate sent me just in the nick of time," he said to her. "Unless I had come, you would have ruined Larry's social prospects by that inborn Van Bruyn stiff-neckedness of yours. You feel that because you are yourself you can afford to do as you please—and you please to be original. Now, that will never, never do. A rich person has no right to be original. It is disturbing and upsetting no end; besides, it leads to envy, malice and all uncharitableness."

Juliet thrust out her chin at him. She was superbly dark, slender almost to angularity, but lithe as a panther and graceful as a wind-blown reed.

"You are wrong," she said, in her velvet voice. "Originality is a duty with those to whom it is possible. Nobody else can be so in need of it as the poor rich people who are *only* rich, consequently pining to be saved from their own stagnation."

Delmond shook his head. "They are not stagnant, only tranquil," he

said. "Society cannot afford to rave over anything that is a part of itself. Enthusiasm for a musician, a prima donna, a danseuse, even a hero, is quite another thing."

Juliet flashed a long look at him. "Yet you want Lawrence to lead society?" she said, a fine scorn edging the words.

Delmond laughed. "Certainly," he said. "A man must do something. Suppose he went into business—he would only crowd out some other fellow much more in need of a chance. Politics? I shudder at the thought. Take my word for it, society gives you plenty to do—as you would know without telling if you had not been so long in loveland that you have forgotten mere worldly things."

"Can you guess why I came out of loveland?" Juliet asked, flinging up her head. "It was for Lawrence's sake," she went on, speaking very low; "I—I wanted him to show himself a man—a man able to do something, no matter what, better than any other man in the world."

Delmond drew a hard breath. Before he could frame an answer Lawrence came to them from the smoking-room, which adjoined the blue parlor, where they sat. How much or how little he had overheard they could not tell. He strolled to the window, looked out a minute, then said, over his shoulder, laughing as he spoke: "Delmond, old man, I shall get that yacht—such a nice, handy thing to have about the house, you know—but I won't go on any Norway cruise with you next year. Want a reason? Well, it's this: I like a horse—like to see him run, and all that—so I'm going in for racing."

"You can afford to burn your fingers as well as any young fellow I know," Delmond retorted, looking straight at Juliet. She was looking down. She got up impulsively and went across to her husband.

"That will be jolly," she said, patting his sleeve. "I know you'll let me choose your colors and name the best horses."

"You shall do whatever you

please," he said, with an adoring look. And then, heedless of Delmond, he carried her hand to his lips.

That was almost two years back of the June day on which the Govern coach was rolling toward the race-course. Lawrence had gone in for racing with a vengeance. His blue grass farm, his royally bred stud, his string in training, represented money well beyond a half million. He stuck at nothing in the way of price for anything that looked a winner. Notwithstanding, his wins so far had been few and unimpressive. "But what of it?" said men like Aspel and Burrage. "You can't expect to have all the luck—you who beat every fellow at the traps and can't be touched at polo." Delmond said nothing, although he was much at the house. Somehow, also, he had quit talking to Juliet about her husband.

Silence had fallen between them all at once on a Lenten day, when they had sat either side the open fire in Juliet's morning-room, with the breath of violets all about them and frosty sunshine streaming in. They had talked fragmentarily, as people who know each other to the core are given to speaking. Then presently, by chance, one hand, a strong, virile, white hand, fell over the other, that was so slender and pink-tipped and full of magnetic thrills. The strong hand had closed upon it with almost crushing force—then all in a minute two people stood looking, looking into each other's eyes, drawing one to another as flame draws to flame.

Exactly two minutes later Delmond went through the outer door. The next day found him speeding south for six weeks of fox-hunting through Carolina pines.

Fate certainly held him in disfavor. Imperatively she sent him to an after-Lenten dinner upon the very night of his return, and gave Juliet into his special charge.

Fannie Trevor was on his other hand. She had pursued Delmond resolutely for five years at least. Fannie had good shoulders and superb arms, hence her favorite mode of

attack was by turning her head to speak over the shoulders. Delmond got the full force of the trick that night, and for once was glad of it. But when Fannie said, silkenly malicious, "I am giving you crumbs of talk out of pure charity—Juliet is too green-eyed watching Larry with that pretty Miss Piperlyn, to pay you the least attention," it taxed even his self-command to answer, in a pretended aside: "Really, do you think Mrs. Govern can be so startlingly original as to be in love with her husband four years after marriage?"

Fannie Trevor answered with a long look. Something in it told Delmond that he had need to walk warily. He had been so much, so evidently, the friend of the Govern house that any slackening of interest or intimacy would set heads shaking, tongues wagging. The heads and tongues must be kept quiet, no matter what the cost. So he told himself over and over in the gray, small hours of that night, and was honest in the telling. If, too late, he had recognized the woman of all women for him, he was thereby but the more bound to save her from evil speaking.

About the sharpest of human tragedies is that we suffer so much more severely for our virtues than our sins. Delmond was not a scoundrel—only a man, a very human man, somewhat too trustful of his acquired strength as against his inborn weakness. With a delicate boldness he made himself Juliet's cavalier in extraordinary, haunted the house quite as of old, and went any lengths to serve her or her husband. And, of course, the inevitable came of it. With shuddering sighs, in broken half-words, love was spoken, love confessed.

But there it all ended—for the time. The pair were resolved to show that they possessed the courage of their social transgressions, and were going away together, openly in the daylight, when certain things had been done. Until then they held themselves austerely bound by the shreds of agonized conscience, while

she yet accepted the protection of poor, unsuspecting Larry.

It was Delmond, of course, who drove that day. As they swept through the broad gates of the course Juliet turned to him with a laugh:

"Isn't it a shame they won't let me see Lady Violet?" she said. "Did Larry tell you? His trainer, the dearest old cross-grained piece of superstition, thinks it would be the worst sort of hoodoo to have a woman step inside her stall to-day."

"I don't agree with him," Delmond said, promptly. "Mercury, the god of luck, was no end gallant. I'll wager he never objected to the rustle of a skirt. But why do you want to go? You are not a horsey female."

"Why do *you* want to go?" Juliet asked. "It is not that you want a pointer—you know Lady Violet has the cup race at her mercy. Yet you'll hardly have the coach in place before you are off with Larry to look her over."

"It is not sportsmanlike to bet on a certainty," Aspel said, back of them; "that is why I hesitate a little about plunging on her ladyship. Say, Larry," turning to Govern, "what odds will you give or take that you don't run first and second for the cup?"

"Oh, I don't know about that. Violet looks to have a big chance," Larry said, his face glowing. "At first I backed the Pride—got ten to one in all the Winter books, you know—but since the sweet 'un' has rounded to in such shape it does seem I've two strings to my bow."

"I heard just this morning of a dark one," Burrage said. "It is Seminole, that devilish black brute that has been trained in the Lucas string. Billy Lucas says he can burn up the wind—if he has a mind to run. If he has not a mind—well, he'll burn up his backers' money instead."

"Let us hope he will have a mind—to-day," Juliet said, laughing softly. "I want Larry's first grand *coup* to be as spectacular as possible. And if this dark horse hasn't a mind, it's all over but the shouting. The Pride

can beat any of the others as far as Lady Violet is going to beat him."

"Don't be rash, Juliet," Larry counseled, smiling broadly. "You mustn't mind my wife," he went on. "I've never told you before, but she really bought Violet—picked her out and made me bid for her the minute she was led into the ring. And she has made me keep her out of it until now. I don't just understand it, but some way she has a notion that a horse has got to grow up specially for winning a big event."

"Juliet always did know a lot about horses—and men," Fannie Trevor said, clipping the last words. Fannie was looking very well, her dimpled, creamy blondness accentuated by a setting of apple-green fluff. Hidden fires smouldering in the depths of her sea-green eyes told of a tense and edged mood. Subtly, unaccountably, by some unnamed sixth sense, she felt the peril of her hopes. She had been watching Juliet narrowly all the way—Delmond, too, but had not surprised so much as a warm glance.

For a year she had hated Juliet actively. Before that, her feeling had been the impersonal human resentment against the people who are born to the things nearest our own liking. To-day the hate was hot and leaping—quickened out of all proportion by the fact that Juliet, in filmy black touched here and there with gold, was so marvelously beautiful she made other women appear poor and garish. "She had no right to do it!" cried something down at the bottom of Fannie's heart; "she had so much else, so very much—great love and greater riches—it was cruel for her thus to bear off the palm of beauty without even a contest."

Fannie understood what was back of her mute protest, but would have died rather than confess it. She was no savage, no odalisque to fly at this other woman's throat, crying out: "Give back—give back my lover!" Delmond had been devoted to her, in a lazy, half-cynic fashion, until this last year. Since then he had drawn away sensibly, yet it would have puz-

zled her to say exactly wherein estrangement lay.

The course was but six miles from Whin-Bush, the Govern country-house, yet Delmond picked his road so skilfully he managed to make the distance twelve. He drove, as he did everything, after a fashion of his own, alike beyond reproach and imitation. They were to lunch in true sporting style on top of the coach. There had been talk of the clubhouse, but Juliet had held up her hand, shuddering, to say: "Have you men gone in for life insurance? They give you such—such fierce things to eat on cup days. No, no, leave the clubhouse to people who choose to be exclusive at so much a head. I want to be in the thick of things—where the hats make a cloud and the yells are half a mile high."

She had her way, of course. Govern withstood her in but one thing—the visit to Lady Violet. It was the first time in all their married life he had crossed her wildest whim. And he did it so half-heartedly, so apologetically, she laughed away her pique.

"You see, Juliet, it isn't as if it were anything else," he said, softly patting her hand. "There must be luck—all the fellows say so—and, besides, haven't I proved it?" Under his breath he added: "I want to win more than I can tell you—I want the cup—for you."

Juliet turned away from him. She caught Delmond's eye and colored. "You will take me into the paddock?" she said, impulsively.

Delmond smiled. "I will do even better," he said. "It happens that I know Lucas, so you shall have a private view of this dark horse they are telling of. I can't fancy you a hoodoo, but if there's anything in it we'll give Larry a still better chance to win."

"We will go along, too," Fannie Trevor said, imperatively, laying her hand on Aspel's arm.

Delmond looked her critically over. "H-m-m," he said. "I don't know. Different men, different hoodoos.

Lucas's stable does not bar petticoats, but would t'row a fit, from the trainer down, at sight of anything green."

"Then we'll wait for a paddock view; there all women and all colors are free and equal," Juliet said.

"How about men?" Fannie cooed.

Juliet lifted her chin. "Men never go into the account," she said, "except sometimes."

Involuntarily Aspel's eyes ran from Juliet to her husband. Larry, standing by the horses, looked at his wife. Aspel was not a decadent novelist, but there came to him the thought that, after all, there is deep truth in the tale of Cinderella. This fairy-fine coach had its ultimate origin in things even more prosaic than a pumpkin. Then his glance wandered to Delmond, and he said, in a louder tone than seemed necessary: "No, men do not really matter—except sometimes."

The day had been ideal, but toward four o'clock the heat grew sweltering. The breeze from the water died to a ruffling ghost of air, and a soft shimmering haze, too thin to be called a cloud, spread over the face of the sky. All the flowers blotching the infield's green velvet hung their heads thirstily. The turf itself had lost its resilience, and lay as if molten beneath the many trampling feet. All the world had come to the cup race, and a good proportion on wheels. Coaches clustered thickly along the rail. Govern's coach, the *Vixen*, had, of course, the place of honor nearest the finish line, where victory or defeat could be most thrillingly viewed.

Govern himself had vanished as soon as luncheon was over. The other men had followed him shortly, but had all come back, tapping their breast pockets significantly and bantering the ladies to lay astounding wagers in gloves, candy and next-Winter violets. Juliet accepted everything. "Look out! I shall bet you all to a standstill," she said, smiling at Aspel.

Delmond clambered up beside her.

Fannie Trevor was at the other end of the coach and for the time absorbed in Burrage's account of ring odds.

"Can you sail next week?" Delmond asked, under his breath. "I had word this morning that all the transfers were ready."

For all the stifling heat Juliet shivered faintly. "I can be ready," she said, in his own key. "But—after all—"

"I have always believed you knew your own mind," Delmond said. "Do you mean to prove me mistaken?"

"I do not understand—" Juliet began.

Delmond touched her hand lightly. "We planned to go—as soon as possible," he said. "It is just now possible to go—in the way we chose."

"Poor old Larry!" Juliet said, a little wistfully. "He—I can't bear to think of him! He will be so triumphant to-day—and then—"

"I can't bear to have you think of him," Delmond said, grimly. "It is settled that we go." Then, raising his voice: "Miss Trevor, I am so reckless as a result of your neglect I will bet whatever you please—against the favorite."

"Let me see! Will you take my dear Buster against those lovely antique rugs of yours?" Fannie asked, her eyes sparkling more than ever. Buster was a pug of distinguished ugliness, and Delmond's special abhorrence.

"Done!" Delmond said, decisively. "I call the rest to witness the wager. What form of death do you think Buster would prefer, Miss Trevor?"

"Choking to death with ice cream, I should say," Burrage interposed.

Juliet laughed softly. "You chaps are trying to make us believe Lady Violet can lose," she said. "But we know too much for that. Confess, now, you have each played her at less than even money."

"She talks like an expert," observed Fannie Trevor. "That comes of having one's husband a racing man."

Delmond shook his head. "You're

terrifically mistaken," he replied. "It is I who taught Mrs. Govern all about odds. Shall I teach you also? Fascinating study, I assure you."

"You haven't time just now," Aspel said, before Fanny could speak. "Parade's coming! I say, all those brutes are beauties to look at."

"Yes! I wish they could all win!" Juliet exclaimed.

Delmond smiled. "If they could, my dear Mrs. Govern," he said, "nobody would turn his head to look at a cup race."

This cup race was properly the Holly Stake, an event so much a classic that every gentleman-owner was wild to win it. Others might be richer, better worth commercial consideration, but none gave such prestige. The Holly was a handicap, open to all ages. The distance was a mile and a half, so the younger division was conspicuously absent. But since the course was lightning fast, and the club controlling it an organization of distinctly high fashion, the great world, the horse world and the jolly, every-day, holiday mass came out together to watch the event.

Always, until this year, it had been a great betting event. Govern appeared to have it so completely at his mercy now that the speculation was a thought languid. The bookmakers knew too well the glorious uncertainty of even the best things on four hoofs to do more than shade odds warily, though more than one said they could afford to risk something on the Pride—he had been running two years, and had never once disappointed.

The Pride was good to look at, and, better, a stayer—a splendid, lean, long-striding chestnut, unblemished at four years old, though he had won above a hundred thousand dollars in stakes and purses. He was more than royally bred—by Hanover, the peerless, out of a Ten Broeck mare. Govern had bought him at the close of the last season, paying nobody exactly knew what for him, on purpose to win the Holly. Everybody had congratulated him, and said the winning was a certainty, barring death

or accident. It was almost miraculous how the wise men of the turf agreed about the Pride. He was, they said, not merely the horse of the year, but the horse of the century, and certain to eclipse even the fame of his great sire. Further, they threw bouquets at themselves for having recognized the fact six months or a year ago, and other and bigger bouquets at the new owner, whose way of doing things turfward "was sure to revive the best traditions of the sport of kings."

Early in May there was consternation among the wise men. Govern bet as liberally as he bought, but always above board. So he made no bones of letting anybody know that a maiden four-year-old, a mare at that, had taken the Pride into camp when he was as fit as fit could be. The two had not run with weight up—that was the crumb of comfort to the wise. Mares had been known before to be speedy, they said to each other, wagging their heads, but when it came to staying, to carrying weight, to standing a drive, that was another guitar.

Lady Violet was by Himyar, out of a dam unnamed, but going back straight to Pocahontas, Glencoe's Derby-winning daughter. Her coat was a deep copper red, her mane and tail flaxen. Not so tall nor so big-boned as the Pride, she yet had length, quality and substance. The length was specially noticeable in her neck, when it stretched to the uttermost in a fighting finish. She had marvelous legs—flat, firm, clean of hair, with not an ounce of superfluous bone anywhere, from hip or shoulder to the long elastic pasterns, and tipped with firm, level-treading feet. Except in a close finish she was kind as a kitten. How she would stand the drive in a real bruising race remained to be seen. So far she had answered every question asked her in a way to wreath her trainer's face in smiles, even though at first he had resented her presence and hated her for relegating the Pride—very much his pride—to the shade.

"Govern first and second," had

been common prophecy until the cup day came round. Govern had declared to win with both horse and mare, so there was edged expectance of a battle royal. The first whispers of Seminole as a real contender were heard with incredulous scorn. But when the whisperers began to back their whispers with currency of the commonwealth, and in good fat quantities at that, the scorn changed to something like concern. Men began to recall dimly that the black Tremont colt's dam had a line of four-milers back of her, also that Tremont himself had gone out of training unbeaten. Besides, the rail-birds had been saying all along the devilish black "un" was chain-lightning, if only you could ever count on his "turnin' hisself loose." The result was a rush to question Hilbury, who trained the Lucas string. Hilbury was not talking, either with his mouth or eyes. All he would say was, "The black 'un's' a shore starter." After that he pointed eloquently to the entrance list.

As the horses went through the broad stretch, so heavily sprinkled it gave out the smell of new rain, a hail of cheers and handclappings greeted them, swelling to a hurricane when the Govern pair came in front of the stand. The red mare stepped mincingly as if she trod the air, very unlike the Pride, whose easy, elastic motion evoked yet wilder cheers. Now for two years the talent had sworn by him. It was never going to believe, without seeing, that any mare ever foaled could make him lose for it even part of the dollars he had helped it win. It eyed his new colors, white, with cherry cap and sash, somewhat askance, but of course was ready to shout itself hoarse when it should see them first over the finish line.

As the two white jackets swept round the turn the cheering lulled, then grew ironically loud for a trio of selling-platers whose presence in the cup race gave it a touch of opera bouffe. Then, as if the on-lookers drew breath, there was a dead pause,

brief but telling, and after it a shrill, scattered hurrahing, coming variously but in thin volume from every part of the crowd. It was for Seminole, ridden by a lad as black as his coat. The lad's cap and jacket were also black, but livened by sash and pompon of real gold. They might have been chosen to match Juliet's costume, but nobody noted the coincidence—if coincidence it was. Eyes were too rapt upon the black Tremont colt.

"Jove! But he's got the action!" Aspel said in Burrage's ear.

Burrage nodded. "Clean as a greyhound everywhere," he said. "If he runs—that's a mountainous *if*—track records are likely to smash, no matter who wins."

"Silence after the start," Delmond said, settling himself at Juliet's elbow.

She turned a troubled face to him. "I wish you were with—Larry," she said, speaking the name with some difficulty. "He—he is so wrought up, he is hardly himself."

"Larry will come to no harm," Delmond said.

Burrage leaned forward with a gesture of warning. "We are about to see the race of our lives," he said. "Pay attention, you miserable sinner! It's ten dollars fine for the man who puts down his glass now until the finish."

The start was half a mile up the track, but through the glasses it came right under the eye. Juliet caught her breath as she saw the Pride on the very outside of the line, and Lady Violet next the rail. Fate itself was on the side of her choice. There were nine starters; if the Pride won, he must make up a lot of ground. So also must Seminole, who came next on the outside. The opera bouffe contingent and the respectable long shots had been lucky enough to win middle place.

The third attempt sent the nine away, magnificently aligned, and all running. In a breath the line broke—the course looked as if a rainbow had suddenly exploded and each fragment

had taken to itself the legs of a horse. Blue jackets, red, yellow, green, orange, crimson, flashed momentarily in front, then were swallowed in the ruck. But still there was a white jacket keeping place at either side, and a black one, neither gaining nor losing.

The stand rose at them as the flyers flashed past, but nobody on Govern's coach did more than breathe hard. At the turn into the outstretch, three-quarters of a mile from home, Lady Violet ran a length clear of everything.

Juliet gave a glad cry, but Burrage shook his head, and muttered: "Heap too early—half a mile at least."

He looked to see the mare fall back, but she held her place, and bettered it. At the next quarter she led by two lengths. The platers were out of it entirely. Even the best of the place-horses were tailing. But the Pride had drawn ahead of Seminole, and was after his stall-mate, and for the first time running his best.

At the furlong pole he locked her, at the quarter hung at her throat-latch, with Seminole three open lengths behind. Shouts of "Govern, first and second! Govern's all right!" began to swell jubilantly as, side by side, the white-and-cherry colors tore down the stretch. Juliet was white. Involuntarily Delmond's hand fell on hers in a crushing grip. If she had dared look she would have seen his eyes blazing, his face set and gray. Suddenly it grew impassive. Something was happening on the course—something that stunned to silence the madly shouting throng.

Seminole had found himself. With low head, with eyes of flame, neck stretched to the uttermost, ears flat against the silken neck, he came with great space-devouring bounds, stretching so wide he seemed to lie flat on the earth, gathering so quickly, so mightily, his leap was that of a javelin, giant-hurled. A wink of the eye, and he had locked the two leaders.

Passing them was another thing. It was beautiful to watch Lady Violet

go down to it, stretching, leaping, recovering, in the swift might of massive and virginal muscle. The Pride hung on gamely. He had the grit of a bulldog, but in the last ten yards he fell half a length behind. It was the red mare against the black horse, the black jacket against the white. And how they fought it out to an eyelash finish, men tell to this day when the cup race is recalled.

Side by side, stride for stride, panting, rolling in their gait, with blood-shot, bursting eyeballs and steel-scarred flanks, but never swerving from the stinging catgut, horse and mare swept on to victory and defeat. Now the black nose was in front, now the red. They ran hardly a yard apart, and at the very last, when the black nose showed by barely an inch, there was a new record for the Holly, full three seconds fast.

All waited in dead silence for the time and the winner's number to go up. As they were hoisted there came a wild wave of shouting. Juliet's eyes were dim—so dim she did not see her husband at the coach steps until he said, trying to speak jauntily: "Well! We—we didn't win, Juliet—but we were beaten by a friend."

"Hush!" Delmond said, imperatively, leaning across Juliet. "Leave all that for another time, old man."

"Tell me now!" Juliet said, still more imperatively, her face white

but perfectly controlled. "Who is the friend?"

"Delmond! He—he bought Seminole day before yesterday. Congratulate him—will you please—for both of us," Lawrence said, turning away.

Juliet turned on her lover eyes luminous with scorn. "I do congratulate you—with half my heart," she said, lightly; then, under her breath: "But not as I congratulate myself—with the other half. In losing the race to you, Larry has won—something else. Something I believe he cares even more about."

"Juliet! I did it for you—you only!" Delmond began, eagerly. "You—you were giving up so much—I—I wanted something more to sacrifice—for you. So when I found out Seminole could certainly win—"

He stopped short. Juliet had slipped down, openly, into Larry's arms and was walking off with him, her head in air.

Perhaps Delmond's face told tales—or it may be Burrage was a mind reader. Whatever the fact, Burrage said to him as they went home, with Govern handling the ribbons and planning with Juliet to win the cup next year: "No doubt it will be a horse race, but it can hardly come up to this. Nobody in this crowd will ever forget to-day. Eyelash finishes, you see, are so very exciting."



CAUSE AND EFFECT

DIGESTION, much like Love and Wine, no trifling will brook:

His cook once spoiled the dinner of an emperor of men;

The dinner spoiled the temper of His Majesty, and then

The emperor made history—and no one blamed the cook.

F. J. MACBEATH.

ENGAGED

THEY both deny the rumor.
 He says, "The thing's absurd,"
 And shows a marked ill-humor
 If any doubt his word.
 A look of injured innocence
 Greets gossip's sly impertinence.

She tries to treat it lightly,
 And, laughing, to proclaim
 Its falsity, yet brightly
 She blushes at his name.
 Her laugh is forced, her smile constrained—
 She, once so calm, so self-contained.

Wherefore, it's almost certain
 The sly report is true;
 Thousands, behind Time's curtain,
 Have acted as they do.
 The man denies to beat the Dutch,
 "*The lady doth protest too much.*"

S. DECATUR SMITH, JR.



A STUDY IN THANKFULNESS

SO the two escaped utter damnation.
 And as the man went his way, he pondered.
 At last he spoke aloud. "Thank God!" he said; and then, smiling, "The
 little dear!"
 But the woman was left alone.
 And presently she likewise spoke, and said, "Thank God!"
 And then, quickly, "The fool!"

Y^e Conclusion of y^e Whole Matter.

R. W. ST. HILL.



A CONVENIENT MEMORY

MRS. GOLIGHTLY—I can't remember one-half the things I bought over
 in Europe.

MR. GOLIGHTLY—I'm glad to hear you say so, my dear, because when we
 landed you declared only about one-quarter of them.

THE FIRST ADVENTURE OF MR. BING DANG

By Margaret A. Klein

MR. BING DANG went up the steps as fast as his legs could carry him. He could not go so very fast, because his legs were short and small; they were legs that had never had the experience of wearing out a pair of trousers.

Mr. Bing Dang had on his first corduroys, and they fitted well to his tiny shape. Since the few days ago when he had put them on for the first time—or they had been put on him—he had been filled with an exhilaration he had not known before. He wanted to do things, to go abroad and explore, untrammelled by a grown-up female who wore a white cap and apron. He felt his manhood within him.

Mr. Bing Dang was a name the young gentleman had given to himself long before the epoch of trousers. It was while he was still in skirts and was longing to be a man.

So now he went up the steps that led he knew not where. He had not soon those steps before; he had found them for himself. He knew that Cap-and-Apron would not permit him to try them nor to explore the region above them. He struck out for himself.

The steps led out to the roof of the beautiful tall apartment house where Mr. Bing Dang's father paid a good many thousand dollars a year to live and eat and see people. Heretofore Mr. Bing had moved from floor to floor of the building in elevators or on wide, carpeted stairs. This was different; it was going up a narrow, uncarpeted stairway—alone!

At the top he paused. He was not followed. Cap-and-Apron was writing a note to her sweetheart. At that

moment Mr. Bing Dang did not know what "sweetheart" meant. He was soon to feel, though, in his own little heart the need to write, if he could; to send a message; to see someone he longed to see and could not.

The door at the head of the flight of steps was ajar. Mr. Bing Dang pushed it wide open and went out upon the roof.

Ah, what a world! Overhead in a blue sea-sky sailed boat-clouds that appeared to be coming straight toward him. Valkyrs galloped in the blue right for his hero body. He ran from them forward and looked away.

Over there were trees and trees. That was the Park. It was now green and purple in the warm light of the early Spring. Up that side was a long bridge that appeared to lead to the foot of a height, with some trees and big buildings high up swimming in the air.

"Chirp—chip—cheep!" Mr. Bing looked, and on the edge of the wall that was around the roof a bold sparrow had come and was picking up bits of thread in its bill, then dropping them and picking them up again. When he looked at it the bird flew away, with some long threads sailing out behind it.

The adventurer went to the place from which the bird had flown. The movement of his little legs, free in their corduroys, was a special feeling to him. He walked further on. He wondered what he would find. He went around a stack of chimneys; he moved about the edge of the air-shaft. He was on the other side, away from the door, shut off from his past, separated from all he had known before.

Mr. Bing Dang stopped. Coming toward him was a little girl about his own size; certainly she was no bigger. She had brown, tangled hair; big eyes to match the color of her hair, but with a different shine, and pink cheeks. A red dress she had on pleased Mr. Bing Dang, because he could not know that one yard of the ruffled edge of his collar could have bought the whole thing—buttons, thread and all—and that her mother had made it.

Red was beautiful to Mr. Bing Dang; he had not known it before. Pink cheeks, brown tangles, shiny eyes were beautiful to him, but, as yet, he did not know it.

The two faced each other. The little girl put her finger to her mouth. The baby man did the same. Then a vague sense of importance made him take his finger away.

"What 'ou name?" he asked.

The little girl also took her finger from her mouth.

"Name Rosylue," she answered.

She was not as old as he by several months, but she spoke more plainly.

Nothing more was said by either for some time. Rosylue walked off a little way, and her companion followed her. She did not ask his name. Such is the trust of woman!

"My dog Sapho gone." Mr. Bing made the advance again.

"Dog gone?" queried Rosylue.

"Man 'tole Sapho on o'cheets—gone!" and he made an expressive gesture.

"Gone?" and Rosylue repeated the gesture, with a shake of her head.

"Yesh—gone," repeated he.

"You know de white cat?" asked Rosylue, after another silence.

"White cat?"

"I know de white cat; white cat on de roof."

"White cat on de roof," repeated Mr. Bing, with the same intonation she had given the words.

"Yes, white cat. Dere's de white cat," and she danced up to the wall, and, climbing up, leaned over, pointing down to a roof below.

"Dere's de white cat!" she cried again.

He followed her; he climbed up, too, and leaned over the wall.

"I shee de white cat!" he exclaimed, in excitement.

They watched together as the cat moved cautiously over the roof and disappeared through an open skylight. Then they got down and stood side by side against the wall.

The Spring sun was on them. Her curls were against his. He looked at her. His little heart fluttered. He put his arms around her. His ruffled cuffs were against her red dress.

"I love 'ou," he said, and kissed her.

She put her arms, in their bright sleeves, around his neck, clasped her hands, holding his head, and kissed him twice. Then they ran away from each other.

"Well, there you are! What do you mean by this, running away and scaring me so?"

Cap-and-Apron, with a man behind her, was upon Mr. Bing Dang. She took him by the hand and led him away, he looking back regretfully at Rosylue, who had put her finger into her mouth again.

"Yes!" said Cap-and-Apron to someone below, as they started down the steps—"yes, ma'am, he got away—I don't know how; and I'm thankful if his mother doesn't find it out. If 'twarn't for the janitor I don't know if I'd ever found him. Was that your little daughter, sir? You'd better keep her where she belongs, or something will happen to her."

Mr. Bing Dang was dragged down several other flights of stairs wider than the one that led to the roof. He had his luncheon on a beautiful china plate, very costly. He did not eat much. He was thinking of Rosylue, and he wondered if he would ever see the white cat again.

Since then he has looked around corners of the corridors for Rosylue; he has hoped to meet her going down the elevator, or when he went for his airing in the Park; he has tried to get away to the roof again, but Cap-and-Apron has had a firmer grip on

him since he gave her that fright, and is not going to let him have another chance.

Once, in the night time, he awoke and started out to find Rosylue. She must be somewhere in that building, he thought; and so she was, but he did not find her. In fact, he only got as far as the hall of the suite in which he lived. There he met his mamma and papa coming through the door, she in a shining frock, with shining things around her bare neck.

"Why, he's walking in his sleep!" she exclaimed.

"No, he's awake," and the papa took him up in his arms. "What is it, Mr. Bing Dang?" he asked.

"Want Yosylue."

"Yosylue! And what's Yosylue?" mamma asked. "Come, go back to sleep, dear," and both those fine people went and tucked him in, one on each side of his bed. Then they left him.

The little fellow kicked his legs about for a while, then sighed, and slept again.

The white cat crawled into his dreamland. And Rosylue was there.



"SO SMALL A GIFT"

HE said: "I ask so small a gift
Compared with all the wealth you hold
To crown another's life—oh, lift
But once that mouth of perfect mould!
But once, sweetheart! To thirst like mine
Can you refuse one drop of wine?"

"Give me the memory of one kiss
To carry like a hidden gem—
A jewel that you will not miss
From out your glorious diadem.
And yet, so priceless is its worth,
'Twill rank me with the kings of earth.

"Time lies before me, wan and gray;
Give me one moment, rapture-rife,
And I will go upon my way
And leave you to your roseate life.
One kiss, sweetheart, of all your store—
But one, I swear to ask no more!"

On yielding lips sank maddened lips;
A star trailed down the skies afire;
A fleet of hopes, like torch-touched ships,
Burned in the harbor of desire.
And in the wreck, a diadem
Lay rifled of each perfect gem.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

THE NEXT STEP

OH, graduate in gown of white
 (Which, looking simple, is deceiving),
 Whose attribute of "sweet" we write,
 Well knowing seeing is believing,
 Beyond this fateful day of June,
 When, 'mid the Summer's necromancy,
 Your soul's with "higher things" in tune,
 Where next will turn your girlish fancy?

In essay learnèd and acute
 You treat "Expansion" in all phases;
 Your words, no doubt, are ripened fruit
 Of study which, in truth, amazes.
 Pray tell us, if there falls to you,
 By right of conquest, some possession,
 Would you an empire built for two
 Affirm to be a retrogression?

Fair graduate, we'd like to know,
 In view of this commencement season,
 What change the world must undergo
 Subservient to maiden reason.
 The study of mankind, we find,
 Is man—a stupid topic, this is;
 Are you disposed that woman, kind,
 Shall ope to him a book of blisses?

Oh, dainty lass in fluffy white,
 Accept our fond congratulations.
 You're wise! Bewitching! And you quite
 Deserve a page of exclamations!
 But haste away, with smile and tear,
 From class and hall—your *alma mater*,
 And grant us soft permission, dear,
 To interview your *almus pater*.

EDWIN L. SABIN.



SOUNDED THAT WAY

MRS. FLITTERLY—Dear me, do hear that poor woman groan in the next apartment. I wonder if the doctor has been there to-day?
 FLITTERLY—I guess he has.

THE SAVING REVELATION

By Mrs. Reginald de Koven

IT was an unusually warm day in early June, and Mrs. Leighton sank back wearily among the cushions of her carriage as it rolled up the Avenue. She was pale, very pale, under her black hat. There was a blue shadow around her dark eyes, and the lines of her slight figure were relaxed. Her hands lay inertly in her lap. She replied with scarcely awakened consciousness to the greetings of her friends as they passed by her, for she was unutterably weary and unhappy.

She drove on into the Park. The leaves were broadly opened and freshly green. The hedges were bright with flowers. Through her half-opened eyelids she could see flashes of color—yellow and purple—blazing in the sunshine. So unhappy she was that she had found the solitude of her house quite insupportable. The walls of the great formal rooms seemed to be falling on her head; their silence choked her, so she had come out into the air.

The soft breeze blowing about her face began to soothe the tired ache in her eyes, to relieve the tension of her thoughts. She began to think of some expedient by which she might help herself. Society? Oh, society! she was so tired of it all. Friends? Could they help her? Best by their ignorance of her sorrow; she knew this only too well. Besides, none of them appeared any happier than herself. She thought of them all, one after the other, and envied none. Yes, there was one. Helen Van Courtlandt; she seemed happy, and it was she who had been the most unfortunate. Husband, children, for-

tune, she had lost them all, and yet she was not discouraged or dismayed, but was making much—yes, very much—of her life. The worn but vivid little face came plainly to her mind as she recalled her, and then she remembered that Mrs. Van Courtlandt had begged of her to drive some day to Hampden House and see what was going on there.

Mrs. Leighton looked down at the clock in the carriage.

"Half-past three," she murmured. "I still have time, and I think this is the very afternoon she asked me to come.

"Hampden House," she said to the coachman. "Drive there."

She had not far to go, for she had already reached the end of the Park's green enclosure. Once across the great bridge that spanned the river, she found herself in a part of the town once fashionable, but now for years declined into the ignoble haunt of poverty and vulgar trade.

"There it is, Hampden House," she said. "The gates are open; drive in."

The house was large and old, of a colonial architecture, standing in a generous enclosure and looking down an avenue of elm trees to the river. Its white columns appeared strangely calm and stately in the midst of the ignoble surroundings. The carriage drew up to the door. As it was Summer, the windows stood open, and the light breeze from across the river blew in and swayed the muslin curtains. Within, it was cool and quiet.

Mrs. Leighton found her friend seated at a table among her teachers. She rose and gave her a seat beside

her own. The room was lined with old-fashioned bookcases of carved black walnut, their heaviness lightened by curtains of thin green silk. Upon the walls were hung large photographs and casts of Italian bas-reliefs. The enterprise had begun with the purchase of the deserted mansion of the Hampdens, left like a wreck on the shore when the fashion of the town receded from that neighborhood. The next step had been the gathering together of a few eager experimenters in social science who were willing to come to live among the people. Mrs. Van Courtlandt, who was the originator of the idea, had given up her life completely to its evolution, and was almost always at Hampden House.

She was seated now in a stiff high chair, very prim and erect, her slight figure clad in a short-waisted brown stuff gown. On the table beside her stood a glass of yellow jonquils, fragrantly fresh and bright. The women grouped about her were of very varying types; they were the teachers, heads of committees and patronesses of Hampden House. An atmosphere of eager interest pervaded the room. The women listened with bright-eyed and smiling attention to the annual report of this mission for the poor, this attempt at organized and benevolent socialism. A young girl in a gray dress had just been telling of the classes in painting, and of her open-air excursions with her pupils, pointing with pride to their sketches, which stood ranged against the wall.

Then there was a sudden stillness, as of unusual interest, and a woman whom Mrs. Van Courtlandt introduced as Mrs. Allison arose and came toward the table. Mrs. Leighton noted the singular dignity and grace of this woman. The first impression was one of almost seductive youthfulness and charm. Then, as she came nearer, the expression of her eyes, serene yet earnest, riveted Mrs. Leighton's gaze.

The structure of her face had gained a fine precision with the years, and although the yellow of her hair was

thickly streaked with gray, her cheek was fair and smooth as the petal of a flower. Mrs. Leighton watched her intently as she began to speak. Then she forgot everything but the words that fell from her lips, which seemed touched with the very fire of eloquence.

She was telling of a visit to a home for reformed criminals.

"Ah!" she said, "if you could see them! Happy once more, hopeful once more. They are changed from what they were. I have seen and talked with many in that house up there by the river, many whom youth and blindness led astray, who are better for falling; yes, stronger, gentler, wiser for their mistake. Men who are still men in the sight of God who made them, but whom the world rejects. Yet do you know what has been done in this last year? Thousands, yes, thousands, of hopeless men have been saved and started on careers of usefulness through this one effort in their behalf. Oh, my friends! there is no Irrevocable; it has passed away from life.

"And now I want to ask you if there isn't a place among your workers for some of these men? Your boys' club—don't you need help there? I assure you there are men up there whose knowledge of life, whose capacity for useful work, would be invaluable to you. There is no teacher like experience. There are wild boys among those you have brought out of the streets. I know of men who would seek them in their temptations and dangers, who would warn them and save them as only they could. Ah, there is something marvelous in the wisdom which sin and suffering teach the soul. Let them come here. I know them, the testimony of the wardens, their record since their release. Believe me, you will not regret it. Give them, oh, give them a chance!"

So she spoke, and they listened with intense respect and growing conviction. Mrs. Leighton sat forward in her chair and watched her; all her soul thrilled to the appeal of

the impassioned words, to the magnetism of that lovely, spiritual face, alight with enthusiasm.

"Ah!" she thought, "what a face! what a voice! What has her beauty brought to her that she should speak like this?"

There was a stir and a murmur as Mrs. Allison returned to her seat. Then the women gathered about her, asking her questions, offering her help. Mrs. Leighton stood apart, still watching her. Then she sought Mrs. Van Courtlandt.

"Helen," she said, "she is wonderful! may I not know her?" It had seemed to her that Mrs. Allison's eyes had often turned to her while she was speaking, as if she read the sympathy in her face.

"Surely, surely," answered her friend. "Come, I will take you to her."

They made their way to where Mrs. Allison was standing in a little group of women, who scattered, leaving Mrs. Leighton face to face with Mrs. Allison.

"You have interested me so much—so very much," said Mrs. Leighton, fervently; "you must tell me how to help you. It would be a privilege to aid you in your work."

"If you could only interest her," interrupted Mrs. Van Courtlandt, "she could help you very much. Try her; it would do her good. Find the real woman in her, if you can. I know she is worth the seeking," and she left the two alone. There was a moment of interest and attraction, a moment that lengthened curiously as they looked into each other's eyes, and then, as if to throw off an influence whose potency perplexed them, they both turned toward Mrs. Van Courtlandt, who was talking earnestly with a couple of teachers.

Mrs. Leighton was the first to break the silence.

"You have known Mrs. Van Courtlandt for a long time, haven't you?"

"Yes, for years," replied Mrs. Allison. "Her husband was a connection of mine."

"Oh, yes, I remember. Poor Helen!

I had thought she would never have the courage to take up her life again."

"I think she is the happiest woman I know," said Mrs. Allison.

"Do you suppose she has forgotten?"

"Forgotten? No; but she had her happiness, don't you see? No one can deprive her of that."

"What was he like—Stephen Van Courtlandt?" asked Mrs. Leighton. "I never saw him."

"He was a gentle creature—hyper-sensitive, very refined, artistic. I doubt if he would have satisfied you." She sent a sudden direct look into Mrs. Leighton's eyes.

"Why?" with a surprised inflection.

"He was too gentle. He lacked brutality. His grasp was all velvet."

"Brutality? You call that an advantage, a charm—you?"

"Perhaps not either; but it is often the basis of both, particularly with women of the over-sensitive type." Mrs. Allison smiled, still regarding her new acquaintance with intent directness.

"I am afraid I disagree with you," said Mrs. Leighton.

"You have never known authority, I think?"

"Certainly not. Neither my father nor my husband has ever interfered with me in any way."

"Ah! So I thought. You have never been relieved of what is sometimes a very uncomfortable responsibility."

"And what is that?"

Mrs. Allison bent her head.

"Pardon me," she said, softly, "yourself."

Mrs. Leighton drew herself up a little at this. But the gaze of Mrs. Allison's eyes was so direct, and at the same time so kindly, that in spite of herself she accepted the personality. But she was silent for a moment and looked away. The room was almost empty; nearly everyone had gone. She turned again to Mrs. Allison.

"It is time for us to go," she said. "I have my carriage; will you drive with me?"

Mrs. Van Courtlandt smiled from her desk, where she was putting away her books and papers, as she saw the two women walking out together.

"Good-bye," she said. "Good-bye, my dear. Is Mrs. Allison looking for the real Marion? Take care, she may find her—take care!"

The sun was still high as they drove out of the gate. Along the crowded street children were playing in groups, laughing shrilly, and unkempt women and idle men lolled in the doorways of the wine shops. The street cars clanged obtrusively.

They spoke little until they had crossed the bridge and entered the grateful quiet and greenness of the Park. Then Mrs. Leighton turned eagerly to her companion, whose expression was calm and happy, and who seemed to breathe with gratitude the peace and beauty of the trees, the repose of the declining Summer day.

"I have been trying to understand what you mean by forgetting myself," she said. "I do not wish to lose my individuality."

"Have you never known what it is to lose yourself entirely in another?" asked Mrs. Allison.

"No, not completely, I have not. Is that happiness?"

"Yes, the highest. Are you afraid of it?"

"I think I know what you mean," said Mrs. Leighton, musingly. "A man once said to me that he had escaped a great peril—he had been dangerously near to being happy. He feared to lose himself—was that it?"

"Probably."

Mrs. Leighton shut her lips and said, coldly:

"That happiness is not for me."

"Are you sure?" returned Mrs. Allison, quickly.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Leighton. "What is it? No one has ever spoken like this to me before. Of course I am sure!"

"I beg your pardon, dear lady," said Mrs. Allison, "but there is something—I don't know what it is myself—that makes me know you."

"I seem to have known you, too, somewhere," replied the other, more softly. "I cannot understand it; we have never met before, and, surely, we are different." The dark eyes questioned the blue ones that looked so intently into them. "Very, very different."

"Yes, I know we are not alike in type—it is not that—but there is something—I felt it as soon as I saw you—something that binds us, some experience that has been similar. It seems as if we were listening to the same music; we would respond, I think, to the same influences, although you might not think so."

Mrs. Allison tipped her parasol and looked out from under its shade upon her companion, who was sitting beside her, gracefully erect, and she noticed with a real pleasure the beauty of the small, dark head, whose every turn expressed distinction.

Mrs. Leighton's manner, as she replied to her companion's questions, was clear and decided, but there was a delicate irony—or was it pity?—about those questioning lips which vaguely disturbed her.

"You have never cared for anyone, I think?" asked the quiet voice. "Never really cared?"

"Not cared?" Mrs. Leighton answered, quickly. "How do you know? Is there no such thing as self-control—as loyalty to duty?"

"Of course there is, and all these are a part of the price some women quite as good as you and I have paid for love."

"But is there no such thing as paying too dear a price?"

"Ah! That is another question. Probably the price is far too dear, but if you really, really love, with one atom, one quiver of the real heart-beat and heart-break, everything may go. It is then no longer yourself that chooses; it is fate. One cannot argue with a torrent."

Mrs. Leighton was silent. Her drooping lids hid the awakened fire in her eyes, and something like the sound of the rolling wheels whirled through her brain. She swayed a

little toward Mrs. Allison, who put her hand upon her arm.

"The only safety for anyone, believe me, is to stop at the beginning. Beware of trusting your own strength. Archangels have fallen, and by pride."

Mrs. Leighton was still silent, and her lashes lay along her cheek. Her lips trembled a little.

"You don't understand me, do you?" Mrs. Allison spoke again, with quiet earnestness.

"Oh, yes, I do," the other answered, impulsively raising tell-tale eyes, "only too well. But what are we to do? Death is simple, if one could end it that way. But what about the living death of slow starvation? Duty may be suicide."

"Ah, no," replied Mrs. Allison, earnestly. "Never! Renunciation may be victory—the victory of your best self. Oh! my dear, my dear! Don't say these things. They are true with that superficial truth which is the most dangerous sophistry. There is a deeper truth; you will find it some day."

"I can't think it out," answered Mrs. Leighton. "Is not true love ennobling under no matter what conditions?"

"Yes, I think so." The answer came slowly, seriously. "A great passion, being really great and single, may in the end seem to justify itself. Each case is different and must be judged alone. But fickleness is never glorious nor variety admirable. And then no concealment; not a double life! No character can survive duplicity. If you have two duties, choose the greater, and try not to look back."

"Am I looking back?"

"I didn't ask you, my dear; you know best. But I can see that you are suffering. Did I say that you were selfish? I do not think you really are. You must take care."

The sun was beginning to decline, and long, cool shadows lay upon the grass.

"Let us walk," said Mrs. Leighton, "by that little lake. See! there is no one there. I am so tired; it would rest me."

The noise of the town came to them distantly, a murmur on the evening breeze. The tender glow of the sunset lay in a rosy reflection on the smooth surface of the water. The warm light deepened the flush on Mrs. Allison's earnest face, but her companion's remained pale and very sad. As she turned to look at her in the flooding light she noticed, with a thrill of pitiful understanding, the blue shade about her eyes—a blue that was almost violet, tender and suave, with its suggestion of suffering; noticed also the tense expression of her lips. Suddenly she drew her arm about Mrs. Leighton's shoulders, quietly, hesitatingly; the other responded with a look of gratitude and sympathy, and they walked on slowly thus, like sisters.

"Most of us have to meet these questions sooner or later," said Mrs. Leighton, trying to speak calmly, "either in our own lives or in those near to us. They are not so easy to solve, not so simple as we were taught to believe them."

"But you have never known the tragedies of life?" asked Mrs. Allison. "Surely they have spared you? Don't look at them too long, don't face them; run away, my dear." Her voice took on an accent of concern as she looked more closely at the pale, averted face. "Tell me: you are really happy, aren't you?"

"Happy?" There was a break in Mrs. Leighton's voice; she tried to hide the trembling of her lips.

"I don't want to pry into your secrets, but you seem like my younger self—myself as I once was. I must speak; forgive me. You have never known any unhappiness? You have always been lucky, always victorious?"

"Victorious? Yes. I know all the joy of victory, and all its pain."

"Its pain?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes, and I am tired of it, so tired of suffering!"

"Has it been a long time?"

"Five years."

"It is broken off now?"

"Oh, yes, six months ago, but it doesn't get any better, only worse,

worse every day." Mrs. Leighton spoke rapidly. "While I was fighting him I was strong, but now that I am left to myself I am afraid. Great waves of suffering roll over me. They overwhelm me. I am tortured every day. I don't know how long I can bear it. It is killing me."

Mrs. Allison took her hand and held it in a warm clasp.

"You have been married how long?"

"Eight years."

"And your husband?"

"Don't speak of him," said Mrs. Leighton, bitterly; "he doesn't know I am alive."

"Ah, well, when did this begin? Would you like to tell me?"

"Yes; why not? You could never know . . ."

The two women had lost all thought of time. They had wandered along the lake to a seat under some elm trees, and there they sat down and went on talking.

"It began," said Mrs. Leighton, "oh, as those things always do, I suppose, with friendship, so we called it. Although I knew there was something else on his side, delicious and warm and flattering, which I supposed I could control."

"Naturally, and which you have, it appears."

"Oh, yes," with an impatient sigh.

"Every day he gave me some proof that he remembered me; flowers or books or charming little notes, until—"

"Until—?" Mrs. Allison watched her companion closely.

"Well, until he became exacting, and because he had also shown me quite plainly how much he was beginning to care, I quite flouted him. How did I dare?" She stopped, musing.

"And how did he take that? Not very mildly, I'll be bound."

"No, but behaved very well, and never begged for any mercy; just departed, and very soon I saw someone else, whom I considered far more attractive than myself, wearing my violets, and—I didn't like it."

"What did you do?"

"Nothing for a whole year."

"And then—?"

"I sent for him, and he came back. I had been very much bored."

"Well, and then?"

"Ah! then it was perfect, a paradise of demi-tones; a friendship that had verged to sentiment, quietly gliding down a gentle grade without a suspicion of how steep it would be getting farther on." She stopped again, smiling a little.

"You were happy then?"

"Oh, yes, it was just what I wanted."

"How long did this last?"

"Nearly a year."

"Ah! a very dangerous history. Love that has the roots of friendship is incurable. Go on."

"Oh, well, you see, he had become necessary to my happiness. I had been very lonely, and there seemed to be no harm. He understood me—no one ever half so well—he anticipated every want."

"He was an ideal friend, it seems, as well as lover. It is difficult to be both; very few men ever are, very few, for that means heart and thoughtfulness and care."

"Did you ever know one who was?" Mrs. Leighton turned curiously to her companion.

"Yes, one, my dear; but go on about this man; he must have been unusual."

"Yes, for he had all these qualities—sympathy—very varied—intuition."

"You are describing a rather effeminate nature. I should not think that such would have attracted you."

"Effeminate?" The manner in which Mrs. Leighton rejected this assertion seemed in some way to answer a question that was in Mrs. Allison's eyes. "His is the most virile individuality I have ever known," she continued.

Mrs. Allison turned away her head and went on with her questions.

"In what do you feel it most?"

"Oh, his voice, his voice!" She broke down completely and covered

her face with her hands. "I hear it all day and all night, all day and all night."

Mrs. Allison put her arms around her. "There, dear, I understand; how caressing it can be, can't it?"

"Yes, but oh! so hard, so cruel, so unforgiving—in his iron moods."

"Yes, and how terrifying they can be!" Mrs. Allison agreed, quietly.

"Not so dangerous as the gentle ones. What a strange nature! A tyrant, and yet so tender."

"Tenderness is not always to be trusted," said Mrs. Allison; "it may only be technique."

Mrs. Leighton looked up, a frightened expression dawning in her eyes.

"What do you mean?" she asked, breathlessly. "How can you understand?"

In an instant her mind reviewed the astonishing harmony of their thoughts, their sudden and mutual understanding. She freed herself wholly from Mrs. Allison's arms, sat up and looked searchingly at her.

"What do you mean?" she asked again.

Mrs. Allison bit her lips, searched for a word, and, failing, hesitated an instant too long. There was a pause, and they could hear the water rippling gently on the shore.

Mrs. Leighton put her hand upon Mrs. Allison's averted cheek and turned her face to hers. "Look at me," she said. Mrs. Allison turned and looked into her eyes. The two women understood.

"Good God!" Mrs. Leighton breathed through pale and parted lips. "Jim?"

Mrs. Allison bowed her head.

"Jim, it was Jim? Jim Duncan? You knew him, too—my Jim?"

For the first time a flash of what seemed like anger or jealousy shone in Mrs. Allison's eyes.

"No, not all yours; yours now, because you have resisted him, so you say, but once he loved me."

"For how long? Oh, Jim! Jim! and you told me you had never cared before! When was it? When did it end?"

"Five years ago last October."

"Oh, my God! and in November he was at my feet! How could he? Oh, how could he?"

"He is a man, my dear, like the rest of them. They are not like us."

There was such hopeless bitterness in Mrs. Allison's voice that Mrs. Leighton turned toward her with a strange look of resentment, jealousy and relenting sympathy.

"Tell me," she said, in a low voice, "were you happy?"

Mrs. Allison dropped her face in her hands.

"Yes, for a while."

"Did it cost you much?" Mrs. Allison raised her face and looked up desperately into the other's eyes.

"Did it cost me much? Shall I tell you?" She stopped a moment, and Mrs. Leighton saw her tremble suddenly and strangely, heard the calm voice falter. "I will tell you what has never been known by any other living soul. You are in danger—I may save you. I loved Jim Duncan absolutely, wholly. I was not happy with my husband. I had married, as many women do, without love, not knowing that I should surely pay the price of my mistake. You were not here then, you never knew my husband; he was much older than myself—very much absorbed in his affairs, which were very engrossing. He was proud of me, I think, at first, but he was—yes, I must say it, for you will understand it better—he was very selfish and forgetful of me, and I was much alone. I tried to make our life a happy one, according to my ideas, which were, perhaps, a little sentimental, but I wholly failed. I lived a bare and starved existence, loveless and formal, in which my real self slowly died. It seemed to me sometimes that, like a criminal with his victim, I was carrying the body of my real self upon my shoulders. Then I met Jim, and it was the same, oh! the very same story that you have told me.

"There was not a day in all those years when I did not see him or hear from him, and little by little, for I

did not care for him at first, he took possession of my life. My mind, my tastes became his, and I lived, *lived* through weeks and months of happiness that seems to me now almost ideal; nothing, *nothing* can take it away." There was a radiance on her face; she looked young again and beautiful, and she stopped thus, smiling and appearing to forget that she was not alone.

Mrs. Leighton watched her breathlessly, paling and flushing.

"Well," she asked, "the end—how did it come?"

"As it always must, when we had lived through every preliminary chapter, and, thank God! there were many. Then came the struggle. I could not accept the idea of a double life. I *could* not, and at last we agreed to go away together and to pay the price. I was blind, completely, and, it seems to me now, strangely controlled, strangely happy."

"Ah! you were happy?"

"Ah! my dear, happy? You spoke of waves of suffering; during those last weeks waves of joy would lift me sometimes almost off my feet, until it seemed as if all the orchestras of nature and elemental life were surging through me."

"And then?"

"Then, oh! oh! can I tell you?—what I have kept from everyone, what I have never breathed to my nearest and dearest?" She quivered from head to foot, dumbly, pitifully.

"Ah, you needn't," cried Mrs. Leighton, drawing her close; "you needn't, dear."

"Yes, yes, I must!" She gasped a little, then went on: "The morning came when I left my husband's house; I was to go into the country to meet Jim; the train went early in the afternoon. After a few days we were to go abroad. I left a note on my husband's desk, telling him that I had gone, and why—that he shouldn't try to search for me, for my mind was quite made up. I asked him to forgive me for the injury to his pride, and said that I knew he would not miss me.

"I did not see him before I left the house, and I got through the hours of the day—I don't remember how, but at two o'clock, when the train was to start, I was there at the station. I was standing just at the ticket gate, alone, of course, and beginning to be a little frightened, when I saw a man, a friend of my husband, coming toward me. His face changed as he saw me, and then he came and touched my arm. 'Mrs. Allison,' he said, in a shocked voice—I can hear it now, the way he spoke—'come with me! I must speak to you a moment—it is absolutely important.' I told him I should miss my train. 'Poor lady,' he insisted, 'you don't know—I must break it to you. When did you leave home?' 'This morning,' I said. 'But you must go back; your husband is very ill, very ill.' I saw it in his face—" She stopped, breathless.

"Dead!" cried Mrs. Leighton. "Your letter—?"

"Yes! yes! oh! yes, it was that! I rushed home; the servants met me at the door, and the doctors—they had not moved him. I went in alone; he was seated at his desk, his head fallen forward, and my letter was crumpled in his hand! No one had read it, no one knew, but I—I had killed him!—do you understand?—I had killed him!"

"Good God, how awful! What did you do?"

"What could I do? I took the letter from his hand, and then I suppose I must have fainted, or lost my senses for a while, for I remember nothing, except waking in my room and feeling very weak and ill. There were flowers near my bed, and a nurse was watching me."

"Oh, my dear, how terrible, how terrible! What a punishment! How did you come out of it?"

"You may well ask me. I cannot tell you. I lived, I don't know how nor why—I so much preferred to die—but at last I began to get better, physically better, and tried to face my life. I wore mourning for my husband, continued to live in his house—think of it!"

"That must have been very hard."

"I could not do otherwise; I had my father, my mother, all his people—I did not dare to do any more harm."

"And it never occurred to you that you were free—that you might?" asked her companion.

"Oh, yes, for we think of everything in times like those, but I put the thought out—it was impossible—not over a grave, and that—oh, God!—of my own making! Oh! how could you ask?"

"Oh, of course, it was impossible, but Jim——"

"I wrote to him that I could never see his face again, for him never to write, never to try to speak to me. He has obeyed me."

"What a blessing that you really didn't go!"

Mrs. Allison turned toward her almost fiercely.

"Do you suppose I think myself any better for that? My real self had gone—my mind, my soul, had gone. I had just as long a journey to make, to get back to myself. Ah, no, I have never taken to myself that comfort."

"But, oh, poor woman! how did you ever live? How could you ever forgive yourself?" There was infinite pity in Mrs. Leighton's voice as she bent over her.

"They told me he had a trouble of the heart, which would have been fatal—that helped me a little. Then I gave away all he had left me. And he left me all—all; I gave it back to his family or to charity. Then, my dear, I faced my conscience, and alone I fought it out. I realized that my life was not my own, to destroy or to throw away in endless anguish and remorse. Day by day I tried—oh, so painfully, so hesitatingly, at first!—to prove to myself that there was something left in me of goodness; and the way to peace was long, oh, so long! But there is a strange joy in bearing punishment, and surely mine was not delayed. There is something very mysterious, too, about the revelations of

absolute agony such as mine was. We must each descend alone into the valley. There is no geography of grief."

"And this has made you what you are—this is why you could speak as you did for those poor people?" Deep love and sympathy looked out from Mrs. Leighton's face.

"Oh, yes, I have tried, every day, to do some good to balance all the wrong. How else could I find peace? And it has made me understand—I have that recompense."

"It is not a small one; don't deny yourself that comfort."

"No, dear, I will not deny what I have learned so hardly; and I know now, at last, that there is a goodness which is equal, perhaps, to that of innocence, and I believe—" she spoke with solemn humility—"I believe we may attain to it." She turned toward Mrs. Leighton with dimmed eyes and a face of touching simplicity and trust.

The other clasped her closely.

"And you have forgiven yourself? Oh, I hope you have."

"Yes, at last, at last I think I have; but you——"

"Don't think that I blame you; who should understand as well as I—have I not known him, too?"

"Yes, I know, I felt you would; but tell me—I was right, was I not?—you were in danger?"

Mrs. Leighton bowed her head. "Yes," she said, slowly. "I think I was."

"Ah, then, do listen to me; you are so young yet, after all, that you don't know. Oh! for God's sake, if you wish to live, much less be content, let these things alone. Law is law, and right is right; we cannot defy them or our own natures. Sooner or later we must pay the price. Ah! don't you think I know?"

She stopped and fell into piteous weeping. Sympathy and pity had done their work, and the silence of her long and lonely sorrow was broken down at last. Presently she lifted her face.

"Oh, take warning, take warning,"

she cried, "if you yet have time! You are unhappy now, but all your life you will be glad."

"Glad," said Mrs. Leighton, "that you have saved me?—yes, grateful to you with every drop of my blood.

But shall we forget him—you and I?"

"Not here, I think, dear," said Mrs. Allison, looking up toward the far blue line of the sky. "Life is too short for that lesson; we shall not learn it here."



THE DERELICT

WHEN high along the windy coast
The sea flings up its angry spray,
It drives along a silent ghost
With broken rails and bulwarks gray.
A phantom hulk, a spectral form,
That shapes its course by wind and storm.

A bark belated in the gloom
Of rolling mist and frozen rain
May see a shape of shadow loom
And vanish in the night again.
It shows no light and gives no hail,
And crêpe-like waves behind it trail.

Pale sailors cling to shattered spars,
A paler captain keeps the log,
And through them shine the moon and stars
As through a haze of silver fog.
No voice is heard across the wave,
It sails in silence like the grave.

The souls of sailors bound for home,
To arms of white and lips of red,
Who found a winding-sheet of foam
And pall of drifting weed instead,
Are they who man in agony
The homeless Spectre of the Sea!

MINNA IRVING.



A MATTER OF FORM

MRS. GREATTE-HEADDE—I believe in a rational dress for my sex.
Nature never intended a woman to drag long, heavy skirts.

MR. TWINKERLY—On the other hand, madam, I am sure there are many women Nature never intended to wear short skirts.

LIGHT AND SHADE IN JAPAN

By R. Van Bergen, M.A.

Author of "The Story of Japan," "The History of China," etc.

"ARE you from Japan?" This question has been asked almost daily, in the smoking-room of the sleeping-cars, in the lobby of hotels, in dining-rooms, and wherever some remark of my Young Hopeful intimated our residence across the Pacific. Then would follow some remarks, plainly indicating that the American public has been strangely misinformed as to Things Japanese. As a general rule, the conversation would proceed:

"Beautiful country, Japan, isn't it?"

For answer, an unqualified assent.

"Nice people?"

A reply to this question is rather difficult, since people differ as to the qualifications required to deserve such encomium. It is best to be non-committal, and "Don't know, I am sure," is usually satisfactory.

"Americans, I understand, are quite popular in Japan?"

I have learned that fact since I have been in the United States. While in Japan, I did not know it. I have never seen or heard that any exception was made in favor of an American; on the contrary, ninety-nine per cent. of the Japanese scorn geographical distinctions, and every white man is simply known by the not flattering designation of *to-jin*, or "foreign devil," varied at times, probably to prevent a too great monotony, by the term *ke-to-jin*, meaning the same with the prefix "hairy." "This," says the editor of the *Japan Mail*, "is an evidence of the playfulness of the people." This sort of playfulness is rather common, and would be excused if it were restricted to words; but when it

extends to actions, it grows too exciting to be altogether pleasant. A tourist who spends his money freely and is not particular about being imposed upon sometimes gains the good-will of the Japanese to such an extent as to be called *Ijin-san** or Mr. Westerner. This, it must be understood, is regardless of nationality, and can only happen to the tourist. As to foreign residents, the common feeling toward them may be aptly described as: "No *to-jin* need apply."

The marvelous increase of transportation facilities across the Pacific bears witness not only to the growth of commerce, but also to the vast number of tourists visiting the Orient in search of new experiences. Those who make a prolonged sojourn in Japan never complain upon their return home that they have been disenchanted. Generally their experiences are varied and many; whether pleasant or the reverse, no one will deny their novelty. Human nature shrinks from being rendered ridiculous; hence, in giving an account to one's friends, the disagreeable side of the experience is usually omitted and the bright or enviable part depicted in lively colors. Thus others are induced to take up the wanderer's staff, and the number of tourists increases.

Of the two routes across the Pacific, the northern is the shorter, but the traveler is apt to lose an illusion and to call the party who named the ocean a practical joker. Every railroad and steamship line is scenic, of course. But, unless the traveler delights in

* Pronounced ee-geen-san. The word *san*, meaning Mr., follows the name, as Jones-san, Mr. Jones.

seeing humanity suffer, and is a seasoned sailor, the southern route is preferable. On arrival in Yeddo Bay, however, the shadow side of the trip is forgotten. The sail here is usually delightful. Both shores are plainly visible; at the slope of their bold bluffs tiny fishing villages nestle upon beach or crag, while the bay is covered with junks and sampans. On a bright day glorious Fuji-yama's silvery summit stands out against the deep-blue sky.

Few travelers start on a long journey unprovided with letters of introduction. The increase in trade with the United States has compelled many American firms to open branch houses in Yokohama, Kobe and Nagasaki, and, provided with such credentials, the tourist is certain of a hearty welcome from his fellow-countrymen, who will, indeed, gladly assist him in his explorations. The visitor will be struck with the leisurely manner of conducting business. The hours are from nine to twelve and from two to four. Two hours from noon are devoted to discussing the daily news in the clubs and the important function of *tiffin* (luncheon). If a stranger during these two hours should desire to make a purchase in a store owned by a foreigner, one of the native employés would meet him with a reproachful and somewhat astonished: "Gentleman gone to *tiffin*; you come back at two o'clock." There is little use in trying a competitor; the result would be the same.

The climate in the Far East, it appears, is not conducive to excessive exertion; but, on the contrary, it encourages broad cosmopolitan views. John Bull, for instance, celebrates Her Majesty's birthday and his other national holidays with liberality and effusion, and he is joined heartily by Brother Jonathan, Johnny Crapaud and every other foreign resident, regardless of nationality. On the other hand, when the Fourth of July or Washington's Birthday comes around the stranger may be excused for thinking that republican institutions are gaining in popularity. There is

scarcely a foreign resident to be found so surly as to decline quaffing a cup in honor of the great Republic, and since, on such national occasions, the Americans act with great liberality and public spirit, a general feeling of exhilaration prevails. French, German and Japanese holidays are all celebrated with indiscriminate loyalty and good humor, so that among the causes of death that of overwork seldom appears. The visitors, therefore, need not entertain any fears of imposing on the time of the hospitable citizens.

More chilly is the reception accorded by Japanese to whom letters of introduction are presented. Regardless of the social position of the tourist, all hope of being presented to the Emperor is a delusion and a snare, unless a diplomatic or semi-diplomatic mission is attached to the visit. Twice a year a garden-party is given by the Court, and foreigners may obtain an invitation through the legation at Tokyo. This usually reads as follows for that given in the Autumn:

"By order of Their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress, the Minister of State for the Household Department presents his compliments to —, and asks their company at the Chrysanthemum Party at the garden of the Imperial Palace on the — inst., at three o'clock in the afternoon."

To this invitation the following instructions are added:

"Frock coat required.

"To alight at the 'Kurumayose' after entering the palace gate.

"This card to be shown to officers in attendance on arrival.

"No party to be held if the day happens rainy."

On such occasions their Majesties pass before the guests, who form on both sides of the road, the visitors bowing ceremoniously. The Emperor is usually dressed in the uniform of a cavalry general; the Empress, after adopting Occidental costume, adheres to it, in public at least, although she has permitted her Court ladies to resume the more becoming and picturesque national dress.

Many under *kimono* (pronounced kee-moh-noh, a loose gown coming to the ankles, with long wide sleeves), of fine white and variously colored silk are worn under the outer brocade *kimono*, frequently stiffened with embroidery and heavy gold thread. The neck is closed with surplice folds of many-colored silk, while the *hakama* (pronounced hah-kah-mah, a divided skirt), also of heavy silk, conceals the *kimono* from the waist down. On these occasions the *obi* (pronounced oh-bee), or sash is omitted. This article of dress, not infrequently costing \$1,000, is the pride of the women of all classes. It is familiar to all American readers from the pictures of *geisha* and other Japanese girls.

As it is impossible for the tourist to be presented at Court, it is almost equally out of the question to be admitted into a Japanese household. There are several reasons for this seclusiveness. The most prominent are the inability of Japanese ladies to converse in any language except their own, and the dread of ridicule of their household arrangements. Although Japan has adopted many modern improvements, such as railroads, telegraphs, telephones, electric lights, labor-saving machinery, and a uniform for army, navy, custom house officers and the police force, the people, regardless of rank or social standing, have returned to the national mode of living. Japanese statesmen assert that our mode of living conduces to effeminacy, and the order has gone forth to dispense with our household furniture and other articles necessary to our comfort. A Japanese residence, therefore, is destitute of sofas, chairs, tables, etc., and as few of our ladies could maintain a squatting posture for any length of time, the pleasure derived from a visit would scarcely make up for the discomfort. There is no social intercourse between natives and foreigners, except, possibly, at the clubs in Tokyo, and in that case it is necessarily restricted to gentlemen.

The tourist, through the good offices of the legation, may secure an intro-

duction to the Rokumeikwan, or Nobles' Club, at Tokyo, of which an imperial prince is the president, and which, as the name indicates, entertains the nobility, high officials, diplomats and the more prominent foreigners residing in the capital. Another prominent club, frequented by the most responsible merchants and bankers, is the Koyokwan, or Maple Leaf Club. It is situated in the most beautiful part of Tokyo, on the hill-side above Shiba.*

Here the maple leaf is everywhere in evidence; it is painted on the wall screens, carved on the panels above them, embroidered on the crêpe cushions used as seats, displayed in the porcelain and lacquer dishes, and even the handsome young waitresses have it embroidered in the *kimono*. Foreign visitors are entertained here in Japanese style; but as such entertainment often lasts for six hours, it is only the owner of supple tendons and a pachyderm digestion that is able to leave his apartments within a week afterward.

But if the visitor to Japan is disappointed in his or her expectations to be entertained at Court, or to meet the nobility in their own homes, it is not at all difficult to meet the most popular of Japanese girls, the *geisha*, in her natural element. It is not generally understood in the United States that a *geisha*, or singing girl, is a superannuated *maiko* (pronounced mye-koh) or dancer. The *maiko* is trained from very babyhood to dance and to chant the poems that explain her motions. As soon as she has acquired both accomplishments, her public career begins. The figures of the different motions are gently sliding and waving, the inseparable fan being in constant requisition. The dresses are marvels of elegance and taste, and by no means inexpensive. The *geisha* accompany them on the *koto*, *samisen* and *tsuzumi* drums, with slow, and to the foreigner, sad airs. When the *maiko*

*Pronounced shee-bah. A district not far from the depot, containing a fine park and temples holding the tombs of former Shoguns.

begins to lose her youthful freshness, she continues her career as a *geisha* until the time for which she has been indentured to her employer expires or she is bought off by a well-to-do admirer.

Any Japanese tea-house will provide both *maiko* and *geisha* for the entertainment of its guests, but the bill that follows is apt to open the eyes of a tourist and, incidentally, his purse. In this case, however, there is no imposition, for a Japanese would be expected to pay the same amount. The fact is that the owner of *maiko* and *geisha* is under heavy expense for their training and wardrobe, and charges accordingly. No Japanese will do more than glance at the total and settle the bill, leaving a handsome gratuity for his youthful entertainers. Before ordering *geisha* or *maiko*, it is well to consult a resident friend, who will be able to furnish an approximate estimate of the expense. At all events, the bill must be paid in the end, since the law recognizes these charges as legitimate, and by settling at once great annoyance will be avoided.

Both the *maiko* and *geisha* assume professional names on entering their career. Some of these are very pretty, such as "Pearl Harp," "Little Butterfly," "Forest Cherry," "Chrysanthemum," "Waterfall," "Little Pine," "Village of Flowers," etc. There is nothing degrading or immoral in their life. As a rule, these girls are better educated than the majority of Japanese women, and their lively repartees during the intervals of the entertainment add to the zest as well as to the pleasure of the natives. The tourists and most of the foreign residents are deprived of this on account of their ignorance of the language. The Japanese does not feel called upon to apologize. He maintains, proudly: "When we go to your country we speak your language and follow your customs. Why don't you do the same when you come here?"

Except from influential persons at home to Japanese of known standing,

letters of introduction to natives will prove a source of annoyance. It is folly to accept them from the "princes" in disguise who frequent the colleges and universities abroad. These young men belong, uniformly, to the class of *shizoku* (pronounced shee-zoh-koo), i. e., the retainers of feudal chieftains, formerly entitled to wear two swords. They are selected for their brightness and assiduity, and since the very great majority have absolutely no means, the Government makes an allowance liberal enough to defray all expenses. Some of these young men have deluded girls into marrying them, darkly hinting at their rank, social standing and fortune. American residents in Japan are invariably called upon to subscribe for the passage home of the silly victims. The Japanese Government does not countenance such marriages. The student, on arriving home after graduating, is placed on waiting orders, at a monthly salary of about thirty yen (\$15.00). It is easily understood that this sum, although adequate to the support of a young bachelor living in native style, is insufficient to defray the expenses of living according to even the most modest demands of American girls. In going to housekeeping, the absence of all furniture and table utensils is difficult to bear, but when the husband treats his wife, as all Japanese do, not unkindly or cruelly, but as an upper servant, the deluded victim seeks to escape. No sympathy need be expected from American residents; they are called upon so frequently in similar instances that they have grown callous, and feel that a young woman, having made her choice, must abide by it. There *are* princes in Japan, but, in justice to them, it must be said that they are not in the matrimonial market.

It is positively unsafe for ladies to visit Japan. The anti-foreign feeling, rampant among all classes for several years, has been greatly strengthened since July 17 of last year, when the new treaties went into effect. The extra-territorial clause, by which

foreigners were amenable to their own laws, as administered by the consul, was abolished, and the lower classes, with whom the foreigner is brought into daily contact, interpret this to mean that any foreigner can be insulted with impunity. The Emperor issued a writ directing the attention of the people toward this conduct, and condemning it in severe terms. It had no effect. Marquis Ito Hirobumi, in a public speech in December of last year, referred in scathing language to the fact that foreign ladies were "jostled in the street and insulted" by students and men of the better classes. There is no redress. Even in Yokohama, Kobe and other open ports it is not safe for ladies to go into the streets. Gentlemen are generally able to take care of themselves, but a few words of advice may be appreciated:

Do not take too much baggage. When a stranger, and especially a tourist, arrives at Yokohama, he is besieged by tailors, mostly of the pig-tail family, with samples of imported cloth, and at prices so alluring that a liberal investment is the order of the day. If the purchaser has ample patience, and does not pay until satisfied that the clothes fit, patient John Chinaman will alter until his patron is suited. But if the clothes are accepted and paid for without trying them on, the customer is likely to have a fit of a different nature. If a Japanese tailor is patronized, the tourist's experiences will be extensive and varied, and may be briefly summed up by the self-commune: "That fellow did not sell me a suit of clothes. Oh, no; he sold *me*!"

Every intending visitor to Japan should lay in a liberal supply of angelic patience, marked: "This side up; handle with care," so that none may be spilled in transit. Even then his stock will be exhausted long before he leaves the Island Empire. It is not absolutely necessary to acquire an intimate knowledge of the native language. A few words or expressions will suffice, although the Japanese, ever since foreigners were placed

under their jurisdiction, modestly claim that, in the course of time, their mellifluous tongue will be the ideal language of the world. Should that prophecy come true, may the Lord help the world!

As it is, the foreign tourist during his sojourn in Japan is liberal in using expressions requiring an exclamation point in print. At first, these indicate admiration, mingled with astonishment; later, when the first sensations are exhausted—for odd sights, such as a child with rather more eruptions than hairs on the head, or a young gentleman of about ten taking an airing in the light-brown dress provided by nature, pall on one when they are so exceedingly common—after the novelty has worn off, expletives, gradually gaining in force, are heard not infrequently. Now is the time to draw upon the stock of patience—or trouble is sure to follow.

There are, however, a few expressions that no tourist can fail to learn, even though the lesson may prove more expensive than the benefit warrants. The first of these is, of course, "How much?" which in the Yokohama or Tokyo dialect is *ikura*? (pronounced ee-koo-rah), but by some peculiarly Japanese evolution turns into *nambu* (pronounced nahm-boo) when a storekeeper in Kobe, Osaka or Kyoto is interviewed. The native owner of a store takes the world easily. He squats on his heels, his hands lazily extended over a *hibachi* (pronounced hee-bat-chee), or classical brazier, and with a sleepy look turns toward the caller. Look out! With that same idiotic expression he is taking your measure, and pretty accurately, too. It does not take long before he knows that you are a tourist; if he is persuaded that you are gullible, he may rise to the exertion of showing his goods, but you will pay for this trouble. If you have an interpreter, your fate, or, rather, that of your pocketbook, is sealed. The guide, philosopher and friend is after a solid rake-off, and when he says, slowly: "I-think-that-is-very-cheap," he tells a lie, and knows it, and does it well, for he is

accustomed to it, and practice makes perfect.

The safer way is to induce some old foreign resident (a man who has lived in Japan for six months is an old resident) to go along when you are infected with the curio-hunting fever. You will not meet with such fervent smiles, nor the obsequious bows you have heard of, but a difference of about two hundred per cent. in the price paid makes up for *that* loss. Besides, you have a fair chance of securing the quality of goods you want, which chance, in any other case, is exceedingly doubtful. The smile of John Chinaman, childlike and bland though it be, is discounted when his Japanese cousin distorts his features.

Every tourist invests in a "boy." Regardless of age, and sometimes of sex, a servant is always "boy;" or, as the natives express it, "boy-san," that is, Mr. Boy. This investment is not made because it impresses anybody to possess a body servant, but because every white man in Japan owns one, or, rather, is owned by one; and this was the fashion long before Kipling wrote of the White Man's Burden. As a servant, Mr. Boy is of very little use, and is not even ornamental, unless his master's clothes fit him, an unusual circumstance; but as a teacher of Japanese customs he is a success.

After the "boy" has been duly engaged at 15 or 20 *yen* (\$7.50 or \$10) per month, without board, except when traveling, he proceeds to make an estimate of his employer's circumstances from the extent of his baggage and wardrobe. After this he institutes careful inquiries as to the limit of imposition the foreigner will stand. The "boy" is supposed to understand and speak English, and appears to do so pending the engagement. But no sooner has he been inducted into office than the training of his employer commences.

"Boy!" When you *are* the proud possessor of a valet you like to enjoy his services, so you open the door and call, as others have done in your presence. "Boy!" No answer. You re-

peat the call in a louder tone, with the same result. Gradually you grow hot, and finally fairly yell: "Boy!!!" Back comes the answer: "*Tadaima!*" (pronounced tah-die-mah).

Mr. Boy has been quietly conversing with his colleagues in the servants' quarter while smoking the pipe of happy contentment. He has heard you, but is of the opinion that you must learn now or never that such a thing as hurry is not indigenous to Japan. He might have answered, "Coming!" but that would not at all express his sense of injury, hence he falls back on the sweet, languid, native expression which the dictionaries tell us means "by-and-by," but to which the seasoned resident prefixes "in the sweet." Long-suffering experience has taught the unfortunate dweller of Japan that when boy-san or any other native uses the word *tadaima*, it really means: "Won't you wait till I get ready?" and he collapses. The tourist will learn to do likewise.

It is less difficult to learn the meaning of another very common word, *monichi* (pronounced mee-yoh-nee-chee), "to-morrow." Very few Americans have failed to meet the fellow to whom to-morrow stands for something very indefinite and vague. That is exactly the meaning our Japanese friends attach to the word—to-morrow never comes.

When you have mastered the afore-said two expressions (if you do not do so in three or four days you have a marvelously angelic temper, and your wife will never sue for a divorce), you have the satisfaction of possessing quite an extensive vocabulary. Possessing two more phrases, which follow below, your reputation as a Japanese scholar is established. The first of these is *shikataganai* (pronounced shecat-ah-gah-nye). This jaw-breaker is constantly on the tongue of this highly interesting and much misjudged people. Its meaning is most easily illustrated by a hypothetical case:

A Japanese to whom you bring a strong letter of introduction calls

upon you, usually just about meal-time. You invite him to join you, of course, and he gracefully accepts. During the course of the repast he inquires if you have seen certain lions, of which you never heard even the outlandish names, and upon your answering in the negative, he makes an appointment to give you the coveted opportunity. The time arrives, and you are on hand right to the minute, but your Japanese friend is *non est*, and you don't see him again until you hunt him up or run unexpectedly against him. If you expect excuses your expectation will miscarry. When you mention your disappointment, after passing the time of day, he will lapse into his more eloquent native tongue with *shikataganai*, which you may translate as suits you best, by "Better luck next time!" or "If you don't like it, you can do the other thing!" or any expression somewhat equivalent to "It can't be helped."

With such experiences, it is scarcely surprising that the tourist sometimes loses his temper. The old resident does not, because he has lost it long ago, and has not thought it worth while trying to recover it. It is unhealthy to get excited in Japan since July 17 of last year, because, as said before, foreigners are now amenable to Japanese law, which is an unknown quantity, and to Japanese justice, which, to say the least, is somewhat rank. Discretion forbids saying more on this subject, since the writer must return to Japan, and deprecates any intimate acquaintance with either law or justice. There are numerous aggravations a white man *must* submit to, unless he has the moral and physical courage to do entirely without Japanese help. But that is not the object of the tourist. He is after new experiences—and he gets them, with a vengeance. There is the *jinrikisha* (pronounced jin-rik-shah), for instance. What visitor can deny himself the pleasure of a ride in one of those quaint man-pull vehicles? The first experience proves exhilarating, and after an hour's drive, the stranger,

out of the fulness of his heart, hands the coolie half a *yen* (twenty-five cents U. S. coin), or about 250 per cent. more than the sum to which the man is entitled. Then the fun commences. The coolie knows from the excessive fee that his fare is a stranger; he follows the tourist wherever he goes, swearing—rather literally—in a mixture of Jap and English that he is being defrauded, and often, when his importunities fail to have the desired effect, proceeds to put his dirty hands on his late fare. What American will stand it? Yet it is necessary to submit. If a straight blow sends the coolie head over heels, the man's fellow-fiends appear to rise from the ground, and the stranger runs the risk of being severely mauled. In such a case, or whenever your temper has failed you and caused a mob, don't fight, but shout at the top of your voice: "*Nippon Banzai!*" (pronounced nee-pon bahn-zie), an equivalent of "Three cheers for Japan!" It will act like oil on the troubled waters. The crowd will turn in your favor, and, after you have explained the circumstances to some native sufficiently familiar with English to catch your meaning, the coolie will be sent to the right about. This is the only method to avoid subsequent unpleasantness.

It may be supposed that such cases are isolated, as similar ones with hack drivers at our railroad depots, or that, at least, they are the exception. This impression is wrong. The *kurumaya*, or *jinrikisha* coolie, is above the law; in fact, he is the only man in Japan for whom the policeman has no terror, and, as happens frequently, he is a terror to the policeman. The foreign resident escapes this trouble by purchasing the vehicle and hiring the coolie by the month, and a tourist who is well advised may engage a man and vehicle by the week. But whenever a strange *jinrikisha* is engaged, trouble is sure to follow when the moment of settlement arrives. When it is once known that a foreigner is not to be diverted from what he considers, and is, just

and equitable remuneration, his patronage is regarded with insolent indifference.

It may also be supposed that this description of the light and shade of a tour in Japan is overdrawn. It is not, although Sir Edwin Arnold's copyright was not infringed in its composition. Every recent tourist will bear witness that it is both correct and moderate. Japan is a beautiful country, notwithstanding its earthquakes, typhoons and other similar characteristics which serve to vary the monotony of existence, and for which no admission fee is charged. Many a visitor has been heard to express the opinion—after he had left Japan safely behind—that its beauty might be greatly enhanced if the country would sink under the waves for about thirty minutes and then re-emerge. This, however, seems so drastic a measure as to need considerable lobbying before anything like a unanimous consent could be secured from a native Assembly.

The fact is not denied that many tourists, while "doing" Japan, have written glowing descriptions to their respective home papers. Mark Twain, after experiencing the longed-for delights of a shave in a Parisian barber-chair, was anxious that his friends should share in the enjoyment. The principle is about the same. Besides, in many cases, ignorance of the language sometimes turns annoyance into pleasure. An elderly gentleman of Chicago came to me at Kobe with a letter of introduction. He told me that his sojourn at Yokohama had been one of unalloyed enjoyment. "And," he added, "wherever I went I was cheered. Why, I do not know, but probably because I am an American; for, you know, we are popular in Japan." I did not know, but, of course, did not contradict. In the afternoon we drove to the *taki*, or waterfall, and on our way he called on me to have my *jinrikisha* stop. When he came up he pointed to some seven or eight Japanese who were shouting: "*To-jin! ke-to-jin!*" ("Foreign devil! Hair

foreign devil!") and, his face wreathed in smiles, he assured me that these cheers had followed him wherever he went. What was the use of spoiling the old gentleman's pleasure by robbing him of his illusion? So I nodded that I heard the cheering, and we drove on. That gentleman is now an acknowledged authority on Things Japanese in the city of his residence.

I repeat, willingly, that the scenery of Japan is more than beautiful—it is entrancing. The bluff at Yokohama, the hills at Kobe, Kyoto the old capital, Kamakura (pronounced kah-mak-koo-rah) with its Dai Buts, or immense statue of Buddha; Miyano-shita (pronounced mee-yah-nosh-tah), Lake Hakoné (pronounced hah-koh-nay), and, above all, Nikko, are distinctly beautiful. Indeed, one is apt to grow enthusiastic, and to forget, for the time, the ubiquitous little brown men with heads swelled to monstrous size. I acknowledge, also, and gladly, that the Japanese have an innate artistic perception, and that their individual efforts have added not a little to the exquisite beauty of the landscape. Nor do I feel justified in failing to recognize their all-pervading patriotism and strong feeling of nationality. This is addressed to any prospective tourist, and he should know that, since the war with China, our Japanese friends fancy themselves seven feet two in their stocking feet, and that many a mutual admiration club has been formed where their stalwart appearance and exquisite proportions are the topics of the day. The average foreigner fails to perceive this increase in size, the swelled head excepted, of course. It is impossible for him, unless the air of Japan has been too much for his Sunday-school training, to compliment five feet four upon exceeding seven feet, and one's innate veracity is no credit among a people where "*Uso da ne?*" (That is a lie, isn't it?) is more complimentary than otherwise.

Still, everybody is not built on the same lines. If a tourist possesses the

faculty of stretching the truth, and can do it gracefully and without blushing—even without the blushes our Japanese friends will swallow anything so long as it contributes to their national vanity—he will not find

Japan a very bad place in which to pass a few weeks. But even then, he must not forget the Saratoga packed with patience, nor to practice daily, with stentorian voice, "*Nippon Banzai!* Three cheers for Japan!"



THE PLAY

WHEN the arc-lights on avenue and square
 Shed their white glamor, and the gas-jets glow
 Adown the street, far-reaching row on row,
 And one scarce knows if in the upper air
 Is cloud or star-shine or the moonlight fair,
 Forth to the play the merry pleasers go
 To see the mimes enact, in mimic show,
 Life with its passionate joy and dull despair.

And yet you need not pass the play-house doors
 To gaze on Comedy; behold it where
 Yon urchin capers with absurd grimace!
 And if you mark the human flood that pours
 Its billows by you, ere you are aware
 You will meet grisly Tragedy face to face!

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



DEAD ROSES

BELOVED, the hours that I spent with you
 Were like unto white roses when the new
 Swift Spring bends over each to make it fair—
 Nay, was it fault of mine I plucked so few?

Ah, me! my roses that I bore away
 Faded to memories within a day;
 But I have pressed their petals in my heart—
 In its closed pages are they shut away.

Yea, sweet, some comfort is there in this thing:
 Though I plucked no new buds in any Spring,
 Listen! I turn the pages of my heart—
 Can you not hear dead roses rustling?

THEODOSIA GARRISON.

AN ASSISTED ORDER

WHEN Mr. Meddlar tried to use his telephone, a few days ago, the "hello girl," probably dreaming of her social triumphs, instead of giving him the number he called for, connected him with a line over which a conversation already raged. Mr. Meddlar had listened for only a moment before he discovered that the line had a very irascible female at one end of it and a not over-bright grocer's clerk at the other, and that the lady's order was being given somewhat tempestuously. He therefore decided to facilitate the proceedings, and the wires began to heat up in about this fashion:

WOMAN'S VOICE—And I want a dozen eggs, a dozen eggs—understand?

MR. MEDDLAR—Yes, mum. Do you want them fresh, mum?

WOMAN'S VOICE—Of course, stupid! Do you take us for cheap folks?

CLERK'S VOICE—Yes, mum; a dozen eggs.

MR. MEDDLAR—Did you say a dozen or a bushel, mum?

WOMAN'S VOICE—A dozen—a dozen—a dozen, idiot! And I want a bottle of pickles. Got that?

MR. MEDDLAR—Yes, mum; a barrel of olives.

CLERK'S VOICE—Yes, mum; all right, mum.

WOMAN'S VOICE—No, no, no. Oh, sugar! A bottle of pickles, I said.

MR. MEDDLAR—Oh, yes, mum. Excuse me, mum, I was out with the boys last night an' am kinder twisted to-day. But you know how it is, mum. A barrel of sugar, you said? All right, mum.

WOMAN'S VOICE—No-o-o-o-o! Can't you hear, you drunken booby? I say a bottle of pickles.

MR. MEDDLAR—You said sugar, mum.

WOMAN'S VOICE—I didn't. And if—

CLERK'S VOICE—What did you say that last was, mum?

WOMAN'S VOICE—A bottle—bottle—bottle of pickles—pickles—pickles.

MR. MEDDLAR—All right, mum; three bottles of pickles.

WOMAN'S VOICE—Oh, you fool! Well, let it go at that. And I want two quarts of vinegar.

MR. MEDDLAR—You don't need it, mum.

WOMAN'S VOICE—What's that?

MR. MEDDLAR—Sugar's what you need, mum, and lots of it.

WOMAN'S VOICE—Oh, if I only had you here, you—you—you—

MR. MEDDLAR—That's right, mum. U—U—U—se lots of it.

WOMAN'S VOICE—Gurgle! Gasp! Choke! Choke! Gasp! Gurgle!

CLERK'S VOICE—Beg pardon, mum, but I didn't catch that last. Please repeat it, mum.

WOMAN'S VOICE—You impudent imp! You tadpole! You shrimp!

MR. MEDDLAR—Fresh or canned, mum?

WOMAN'S VOICE—Oh, wait till I get my hands on you! I'm coming round there this instant. You just wait!

MR. MEDDLAR—All right, mum. How are all the folks?

Then the 'phone was furiously rung off—it sounded to Mr. Meddlar as if it had been wrung off the wall entirely—and, with a beatific smile gamboling over his countenance, he resumed his seat at his desk and began drafting his report as president of the local Christian Endeavorers.

ALEX. RICKETTS.

THE BLUE LOBSTER

By Albert Hardy

IT was their first year of married life. Cecil and Amabel were inexperienced, not only in the many and complicated matters attending the marital relation, but in worldly matters as well. But so long as Cecil had declared he could not live without Amabel, and Amabel had weepingly affirmed that she should die without Cecil, the parents of the contracting parties gave a reluctant consent to the union, and there had been a delightful church wedding, a journey and a continuous honeymoon. Then the two mammas and the two papas put their wise heads together. Result: The daintiest little uptown flat imaginable, in a fashionable street near the Park, and the two turtle-doves were left in their nest, which, with all the poetry of a newly mated pair, they christened "the Dove Cote."

Affairs at the Dove Cote moved like clockwork. The two mammas kept all-seeing eyes on the servants and the general machinery, while the two papas kept the machinery in good running order by furnishing liberal supplies of the currency of the realm.

It was a sorrow to Amabel that Cecil could not remain the whole of the twenty-four hours of the day in the Cote; but Cecil was a man of Business—capital B. One of the papas paid him a comfortable salary for smoking good cigars in the office and for keeping away from the books and the typewriters. It took two hours and a half out of the heart of the day for Cecil to go from lower Broadway to the uptown flat for lunch, but he did it every day, and was happy.

Then a little cloud came, and it was blue. The gilt hands of the clock on the mantel were just pointing to 1.30 o'clock on that memorable day when the cloud hove into view on the domestic horizon. Cecil never forgot any of the smallest circumstances of that occasion.

He had just finished his coffee, and was lighting his after-dinner cigarette, when Amabel left her chair and slipped around to his side. By some mysterious psychic influence, known only to married men, he was straightway impressed by the idea that Amabel wanted something. He was right.

"Cecil, dear," she said, as she tried to make little curls of his cowlick, "Cecil, dear, you are *so* good."

"Well, what is it, dear?"

He blew a cloud of cigarette smoke toward the reproduction of Sichel's Madonna and Child which hung over the mantel. Cecil had bought the picture because he thought the Madonna resembled Amabel; Amabel always said it looked like Lillian Russell.

"What's what?" asked Amabel, innocently.

"What do you want?"

"How do you know I want anything?" Now she was seated on the arm of his chair, with her arm about his neck. But she did not give him time to answer.

"I have been thinking and thinking."

"Don't."

"But I have, dear."

"I wouldn't."

"Of course not; there are mental impossibilities."

"Now, look here, Amabel, at just

this time it is very wrong for you to do intellectual stunts."

"There you go, using those dreadful words you get down town, that you know I don't understand."

Two big tears followed one another down Amabel's flushed cheeks. Cecil thought he had never seen such an exquisite pink, and her eyes were wonderfully bright—unnaturally so, Cecil thought. He wondered why.

"Well, out with it, dear. What is it your little palpitating heart desires?"

"Will you get it for me?"

"What is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom."

"Don't quote the Bible. It's neither humorous nor grammatical."

"Well, dear, consigning Ahasuerus to his place in history, what does my queen want?"

"A blue lobster."

"A blue what?"

"A blue lobster."

"Surely, there is no such thing in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth."

"But there is! Listen. One Saturday afternoon, when I could go out, you know, I took the Marston children down to the Aquarium in Battery Park, and there, in one of the glass tanks, was the loveliest blue lobster you ever saw."

"So long as I never had the pleasure of seeing such a monstrosity, I am willing to take your word for it."

"But I don't believe it is a monstrosity. I didn't think so much about it at the time, but now I can't do anything but think—I just dream about it. He had the loveliest shades of metallic bronze and peacock blues under the electric lights. I asked the attendant if he thought he would turn red if he were boiled—"

"The attendant?"

"No, stupid; the lobster. And he said he would probably turn green. Do you think he would?"

"The attendant?"

"No, of course not; the lobster. Will you get me one? Mamma said I should not be crossed, and that I

am to have everything I want. I heard her tell you so the last time she was here, when you thought I was asleep."

"Come now, Amabel, let's compromise. When I come up to dinner I'll bring you as many red or green lobsters as you like, but a blue one—"

"If you love me you will bring me a blue lobster exactly like the one in the Aquarium," and she kissed him good-bye.

All the way down town Cecil grew more and more perplexed. He must see Amabel's mother—somebody's mother—somebody who knew and understood the whims and vagaries of the gentle sex. No, on second thought, he wouldn't say anything about it. They would only laugh at him, and it was all so ridiculous. Of course, Amabel would not insist upon an impossibility. But all the time the words of Amabel's mother kept coming to him: "Treat her very tenderly, put up with her every whim and get her everything she wants."

Cecil smiled grimly. Could the dear old lady have anticipated blue lobsters when she made that sweeping statement?

That night, when he returned to the Dove Cote, he went laden with so many roses, Jacques, American Beauties and Puritans, that he might have been mistaken for a florist's boy.

Amabel accepted the floral offerings in the matter-of-course manner of an opera queen. It was hard, this lack of appreciation, after he had risked the ridicule of his male friends by carrying them home. Where was there one among them who, after over eight months' married life, bore mountains of roses home to his wife? Well, none of them had married Amabel. Perhaps that made a difference.

Cecil felt hurt, but it would never do to let Amabel know that he noticed her indifference. She coldly instructed the maid to place the flowers about the drawing-room and to use the Jacques as a centrepiece for the dining-room table.

Then she searched every pocket of Cecil's top-coat, and ended by slipping her fingers into every one of his waistcoat pockets. A cold shiver ran up and down his spine. Was she searching for the blue lobster?

Dinner was announced. They always dined *en famille* now. It was a relief that he did not have to dress for dinner when he had so much on his mind. She reminded him more and more of the pictures of Rubens—richly colored, sensuous, beautiful.

Amabel did not play for him that night, but, pleading a headache, left him early. Long he sat brooding by the open grate, his cigar out, and his brain working furiously. He felt like a criminal. For the first time during his married life something had come between him and the woman he adored. What made it all the harder to bear was that it was an uncanny blue freak of nature.

As day after day passed the coldness became unbearable. Amabel had never again referred to her whim, but her eyes were often red from weeping. It was at breakfast, the third morning after the rose episode.

"Amabel," he said, over his coffee-cup, "I think I am on the trail of a blue lobster."

"Oh, you darling!" Like Italian skies after the chilly season, Amabel's face radiated sunshine.

"Yes," he went on, as he passed her cup for a fresh supply of Mocha, "I'm on the trail, and I think we shall land him."

"I am so glad you have been doing something. Now let me tell you. I have been in correspondence with Professor Letkemann, the curator, custodian, superintendent, or something, who looks after the Aquarium, and who knows everything about fishes. He says while such creatures are rare, his is not the only blue lobster. And I have been reading Professor Herrick's enchanting book on lobsters, and he says there are not only blue ones, but black, white, spotted and all sorts."

"Really!" Cecil looked hopeful. "Now, if I fail to find a blue lobster

for you, won't an African, an Albino or a polka dot do just as well?"

"Of course not."

"No? Well, I, too, have been reading up on this crawly subject, and I find this Aquarium lobster came from somewhere in Maine where they manufacture—I should say breed—them. In fact, I feel so well posted I think I could write a book on 'Blue Lobsters I Have Known.' Now, if you will have your mother come up and stay with you I'll start for the rock-bound coast of Maine to-night, and I'll bring back that blue lobster or perish in the attempt."

"Won't that be lovely?"

"What, perishing in the attempt?"

"No, the lobster. But will there be any danger?"

"Never having hunted blue lobsters, I don't know."

"There, you're making fun of me again, and you know mamma said—"

"Damn mamma!" thought Cecil, but he did not say it.

What puzzled him most of all was that mamma entered heartily into the plan.

"Get her whatever she wants," said she.

"But, mother——"

"Cecil, I am astonished that you should deny my child anything—and at this time."

"But she wants a blue lobster."

"Get it for her." And he was hurried off upon his journey eastward, with scarcely a good-bye.

Two days afterward a dusty, haggard, weary traveler gloomily bore a small covered basket into the Dove Cote. There in the bow window of the dining-room he found a glass tank filled with salt water, seaweed and glistening pebbles. Aided by the brass tongs the inmate of the mysterious basket was taken out none too tenderly from its nest of seaweed and deposited in the tank.

There was a rustle of soft drapery behind him and Amabel, more radiant and beautiful than ever, tripped into the room.

"Oh, you darling!" she cried.

Whether this referred to him or the lobster Cecil never knew. He was past finding out the moods and whims of woman. He felt vaguely that his presence desecrated the scene, so he left her there, with a far-off, rapt, Madonna expression on her face and her hands clasped in front of her, as she gazed at the weird, crawling thing in the glass tank.

After that the two mammas assumed control of the once happy Dove Cote and all the air was filled with mystery. Cecil was as completely ignored as if he had been the bisque shepherd on the drawing-room cabinet. People went about on tiptoe and whispered.

Then one morning one of the mammas led him like a foolish schoolboy

into a cool, dim room. When he became accustomed to the half-light he discovered the other of the mammas—his mamma—holding something.

"He's a little darling," she said, "and a great deal handsomer than you were at his age."

Then there was a faint whisper from the white-covered bed. The pink rose had turned to a beautiful white lily.

"How foolish you must have thought me, Cecil, dear! but I am rational and clothed in my right mind now. Promise me that just as soon as I am able to sit up you and I shall have a little chafing-dish feast, with blue lobster *à la Newburg*."

"With all my heart," said Cecil.



SLAVES

THREE of us are tired, tired—
Brain and heart and I—
We have worked and felt and toiled
Many nights and days;
We have wrought and laughed and danced,
Give us time to sigh—
Time to rest and dream awhile,
Freed from blame and praise.

Weary we of endless words,
Toil for little pleasure;
Let us go where solitude
Waits with sleepy smile;
Let the silence croon to us
In her softest measure,
Grant us quiet holiday
For a little while.

Life, have we not served you well,
Labored uncomplaining?
Let us turn from burning sun
Where the shade is deep;
Drop the burdens of our smiles,
Our conceit and feigning,
Put our faces to the grass,
Rest, forget and sleep.

MC CREA PICKERING.

A FAMILY MATTER

By Duffield Osborne

THE two men sat facing each other across the table. One was bent with years. His snow-white hair hung like a shaggy mane about his head, but his eyes still gleamed brilliantly from a face whose every line bespoke the Magyar of noble blood. The other was as his father had been at the age of twenty-two.

It was the old man that spoke first.

"Have you considered all things, my son?"

"I have considered."

"And you will yet give me this—this girl—this dancer, for a daughter?"

"Surely not. It is but right that you cast me out. I love her—I will work. I cannot expect otherwise."

The old man's lip curled beneath his mustache.

"And do you think *that* is all?" he said; "that I disown you—my eldest son? Have you not my name?"

"Men shall not know it. I will go far away. There are many names from which to choose."

"I shall know it, and I shall know that the blood in your veins, which is mine and my fathers' from the days of King Kalman, gives life to the baseborn who are my grandchildren. Listen, my son: From your first breath it has been you who were my greatest care—your education, your pleasure—all that could make your life a credit to us both. When you desired to study here in Paris, did I not sacrifice much that you should live worthy of your rank? Then you come to me and say, 'Father, I wish to marry,' and I answer, 'It is well, my son. We shall have a care that a wise selection be made.' 'But,' you say, 'I have al-

ready chosen.' Then my heart stands still, and I ask, 'Who is she?' and you tell me of this dancer here. Is it surprising that I was angry?—that I spoke harsh words? Nevertheless, I beg you to pardon me for them. And now what did I do? I loved you, and I reasoned with myself. You had begged that I would see and talk with this girl before condemning her, and I pondered that our name was noble enough to raise a woman from whatever station, provided only she herself were worthy. Therefore I consented to wait, and I came with you to Paris. Well, I have seen and talked with her. We are here together—you and I—in your apartments. You know what I would say. She is of the theatre by nature as well as by calling. It is there she belongs—not beside your mother and sisters—not bearing my name—not giving birth to my grandsons—"

"Father, you are wrong—"

"No, I am not wrong. This love of yours is a derangement of the brain. I came to be convinced. I am an old man, and I have seen much of the world. You will believe me when I tell you the truth. You will give this woman up—"

"It is impossible. I am bound in honor—"

"In *honor*? But were you not first bound—are you not doubly bound in honor to me and to your mother, who have cared for you all these years? Are you not still more bound in honor to your name—that you do not bring disgrace upon it? When you have discharged these debts it will be time enough to talk about later obligations."

The young man was weeping.

"Father," he said at last, "I cannot give her up. I love her."

"But I tell you that what you now call love is but the infatuation of youth. Believe me, it will pass, and you will thank me."

"No, no. It is impossible."

The old man rose from his chair.

"Then, my son, I *command*. I had not thought to, but it is all that remains. You will return with me to Buda-Pesth to-night."

The face of the other grew livid.

"It is impossible. I cannot go."

"You deny my authority as well as my prayers?"

"I must."

"And you will yet marry this woman?"

"Why do you compel me to say it?"

"Then I can only defend you—myself, our name—as I would against a stranger who sought to dishonor what must never be tainted."

He drew a pistol from his pocket, and cocked and leveled it at the young man's heart. The latter had also risen, and stood facing him, pale and rigid.

"Pardon me one moment, my father," he said, in a strained voice.

"It is possible that here in Paris, you, a foreigner, might be put to inconvenience by those who would

not understand your act and its motive. Will you permit me to relieve you of the necessity of at least being subjected to interrogations that could not but be painful?"

The old man bowed profoundly and handed the pistol to his son.

"Once again—you are determined?" he said.

The other bowed.

"Then, if you will excuse me, I will return in half an hour. Adieu."

He passed out of the door, closing it behind him. His steps wavered, but his face was firm and proud. Half an hour later the *concierge* rushed out to meet him, as he tottered up the street.

"Ah! Monsieur le Comte, your son—how shall I say it?"

"He is dead?"

The *concierge* stared.

"He has shot himself through the heart!" he continued. "It happened directly after you went out. I have had two physicians, but it was useless."

"It was *I* who taught my son to shoot," said the old man, proudly.

"He was a good shot, and it was better he should aim at his own breast than at a more sacred mark. I will go to his rooms now. Pray deny us to all who may call."



SONG OF THE AUTOMOBILE

I RUMBLE over asphalt ways
And rattle on the cobble,
I dash into the cable's maze
And round the corner wobble;
I roll and tilt and turn about,
A record fast pursuing,
Until my battery gives out,
And then—there's nothing doing!

AN EXPERIMENT IN LOVE

By Ruth Milne

"**R**EALLY," said Doris, stirring her cup of tea reflectively, "if there's one thing in this world nicer than another, it's having friends."

I assented, without enthusiasm.

"The only drawback," proceeded Doris, gravely, "is that they are so hard to get."

"And harder still to keep," I suggested.

Doris set down her cup and regarded me thoughtfully.

"I have a suspicion that you think I mean men, Kate," she said.

"I did think," I acknowledged, "that you were—generalizing from insufficient data."

Doris wrinkled her forehead charmingly.

"Sometimes, Kate," she said, "I wish you had never even heard of books. I suppose that means that I have no friends."

"Among men," I corrected.

"I knew you thought I meant men," said Doris, in an injured tone. "You surely ought to know by this time, Kate, that I am not imaginative."

"And friendship between a man and a girl—" I began.

"Is what you'd call an 'imaginary quantity,'" said Doris.

"Did you ever try it?" I asked.

"Dozens of times," said Doris, promptly.

"I mean really try it?"

"Oh," said Doris, "yes, once."

"What was it like?" I queried, interestedly.

Doris raised her eyebrows.

"He was worse than all the others

put together," she said, meditatively. "I never tried it again." And we both laughed.

"No," went on Doris, "I meant girls. In fact, Kate, I think I meant you."

I confess that I felt pleased.

"You see," she explained, "if you were only an ordinary caller, I should be in torture. As it is, I can tell you that I am expecting Teddy Long and Freddy Churchill at five, and suggest that you go up to my study and wait for me."

I felt less pleased.

"There's only one thing I have against you, Doris," I said, setting down my cup. "You will call that idiotic room of yours a study. As if you ever studied!"

"Well," said Doris, argumentatively, "I don't see why you need study in a study—one doesn't draw in a drawing-room. Don't be horrid, Katie dear, because I don't want you down here. You're an ornament to any place—something no gentleman's library should be without, you know—" I smiled sarcastically—"but you really would be frightfully in the way. I'll tell you why. Kate—" she paused impressively—"when you next see me I shall be . . . engaged!"

"Again?" I said, resignedly.

"I was never engaged!" said Doris, indignantly.

"Well," I responded, "people have said you were."

"People have said you were an angel," said Doris, with a charming smile, "but I don't see— Anyway, I never said so before."

"You have said that I was an an-

gel," I murmured. "Never mind—I understand—go on—consider me all ears."

"You wouldn't be as pretty as you are if you were all ears," said Doris, judiciously. Doris always likes to sweeten the drops of bitter which she administers. "But really, I am going to be engaged. I want to see what it's like. Teddy and Freddy—his name isn't Freddy, you know, but it goes so well with Teddy that it ought to have been—have bothered me to death for such ages. And they're really charming boys, only they're so much alike that you forget which one you said what to."

"I don't see that they're alike," I said, ungraciously, pouring out another cup of tea.

"They don't look alike, dear," explained Doris, "but their—their brain processes are similar." Really," she added, in a parenthetical undertone, "I get on very well without going to those clubs of yours. Well, to return to our sheep—"

"Lambs—to the slaughter," I suggested, meekly.

"Not at all," said Doris, severely. "I've been trying for a long time to make up my mind which one I liked best."

"How happy could I be with either—" I began.

Doris frowned.

"If you interrupt so, Kate, I sha'n't be through by five."

I subsided.

"Well," went on Doris, serenely—she is always serene at such moments—"I even tried tossing up a penny—heads Freddy, tails Teddy, you know. It came out—I forget how, but then I thought it wasn't fair to make a test of a thing that didn't depend in the least on the men themselves. And something you said the other day gave me the idea—something about being in love, and being in a hurry to see the girl, you know."

"He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts—" I murmured.

"Yes," said Doris, "that's it. So, you see, I told them both to come at

five; and the one that gets here first—" she paused, dramatically.

"Are you in earnest, Doris?" I demanded. "For of all the foolish—"

"I am sure the door-bell rang," said Doris.

"—heartless—" I went on, but Doris seized me by both hands and dragged me out of the room. "Run up stairs and wait for me, Katie dear, there's a cherub," she besought me. "You'll find some new books—nice ones—in my *study*—" and she fled hastily back to her tea-table.

An hour later I heard Doris come running down the hall to her "*study*," where I was comfortably devouring the latest novel. But she opened the door most demurely, in spite of her haste.

"Well?" I said, laying down my book. "How did the experiment work? Which came first?"

"I am afraid," said Doris, sitting down in the duskiest corner of the room, "I am really afraid it was a failure. They came together—at exactly five minutes of five. And they left together," she added, pensively.

I laughed. "So you are not engaged, after all," I said.

Doris sighed.

"You have a frightful habit of jumping at conclusions, Kate. I should think that with all your clubs—"

"Are you engaged?" I asked, sternly.

"Yes," said Doris, looking at her left hand; and even in the dusk I could see the glitter of a diamond. Now Doris had never worn diamonds.

"Which is it?" I asked, resignedly. "And what did the other one do with his diamond—I suppose they each had one? And did they take turns in talking to the butler and making love to you?"

"They left together," said Doris, reminiscently. "At half-past five. Because Mr. Paisley came." She stopped.

"Well," I said, "that doesn't explain . . ."

Doris sighed again.

"Mr. Paisley stayed half an hour," she said. "Alone. With me."

I rose hastily.

"Doris," I said, "do you mean that it's Bert Paisley, after all?"

"As if," said Doris, with her arms around my neck and her head on my shoulder—I sometimes have a suspicion that Doris practices on me—"as if it ever could have been anyone else!"

"Then you were simply teasing me about Teddy and Freddy?" I said, a few minutes later.

Doris nodded.

"It's that shocking habit of yours of jumping at conclusions," she said, demurely. "I didn't say what they were to come for at five. You see—" she hesitated a little—"Bert and I had arranged things—last night—and he only came up a minute this afternoon to—to see if the ring fitted," she ended, defiantly.

"Then I suppose he's coming again to-night?" I inquired.

"Really, Kate," said Doris, with her head on my shoulder, "sometimes your intelligence is almost human."

One afternoon, about a month later, I betook myself to Doris's in answer to a pleading note, saying that she was badly "bored with herself," and would her "dearest Kate" please not keep the carriage waiting. I found her in an easy-chair in her study surrounded by piles of paper novels.

"I have been reading till my head aches," she said, plaintively, after our greetings were over, "and you haven't been near me for five whole days."

"Engaged people don't care to see other people," I said, sententiously.

"Are you engaged?" queried Doris, with raised eyebrows. "Well, then," as I shook my head, "don't talk nonsense. I've been pining for you. Kate, dear, I have a secret for you. Being engaged has its disadvantages."

"So soon?" I said.

"I'll tell you about it—as a horrible warning," said Doris, contentedly. "Bert and I have had a quarrel—his

fault, too." Doris looked up pathetically, and I said, hastily:

"I haven't a doubt of it," though I am afraid I had.

"He came in last night and told me he had to go South to-day on business. It surprised me—and I hate being surprised. He ought to have told me sooner."

"He certainly ought," I assented. "Even I——"

"To be sure," said Doris, reflectively, "he didn't know himself that he had to go till yesterday afternoon."

There seemed nothing to be said, so I remained silent.

"Well," said Doris, "I tried to make him say he wouldn't go, so that I could be generous and tell him he might, after all. But he wouldn't say it. He said I was unreasonable, Kate!"

I murmured some indistinct condolences with a sympathetic feeling in my heart for Bert.

"Then I said I would send Teddy a note and ask *him* to take me to the cotillion to-night, since Bert wouldn't wait."

"Well?" I said, as she stopped.

"Well, he said he thought I'd better not. He said it was all right for me to *dance* with other men, but he didn't want me to *go* to dances with them, especially when he wasn't to be there."

"Really," I said, hesitatingly, "I don't think that's very odd, Doris."

"No," said Doris, resignedly, "it isn't odd. It's just like a man. Well, I told him he ought to stay home and take me, then, and he said he didn't very well see how he could, and I said then I was going with Teddy, and he said I wasn't. And then I believe I cried. And that ended it."

"It's very hard on you," I said, consolingly.

"Isn't it?" said Doris, dolefully; "it's real tyranny."

"Oh, not quite so bad as that—" I began, when her maid came in with a huge florist's box.

"A peace offering," I said, almost enviously, as Doris buried her face

among the fragrant American Beauties.

Doris smiled.

"To wear to-night," she explained.

"Then you are going?" I said.

Doris opened her eyes reproachfully.

"You didn't think I'd miss the best dance of the season, Kate!"

"With Teddy?" I asked, patiently.

"No-o— You see, Bert decided he could stay over and take an early

train to-morrow morning. Don't you want to give him a favor to-night, Katie?"

I rose to go. "Poor Bert!" I said, as I slipped on my jacket. "It's real tyranny."

"Isn't it?" said Doris, as she pulled my face down to hers. "And yet, you know he likes it."

"I haven't a doubt of it," I said, warmly.

And I hadn't.



FLIRTATION UNDER DIFFICULTIES

GIRL IN PINK WAIST (*who is evidently trying to make an impression on tall West Pointer*)—I suppose you are home on a patrol?

West Pointer stares blankly.

GIRL IN PINK WAIST (*seeing she has made a break*)—Oh, how stupid! I meant a furlong.

West Pointer faints.



THE PRIDE OF THE PROPHET

IF the saddest words of tongue or pen
Are really these: "It might have been,"
The gladdest words to speak I know
Are those kind ones—"I told you so."



ALL GONE SAVE EXPERIENCE

CLEVERTON—Now that you have succeeded in getting on such intimate terms with New York's most exclusive literary set, and meeting so many distinguished men, I don't see what you want to quit for.

DASHAWAY—The fact is, I haven't a cent left.



HE PROVED IT

MOTHER—I told you to tell that young man that he couldn't kiss you.

DAUGHTER—But, mamma, he could.



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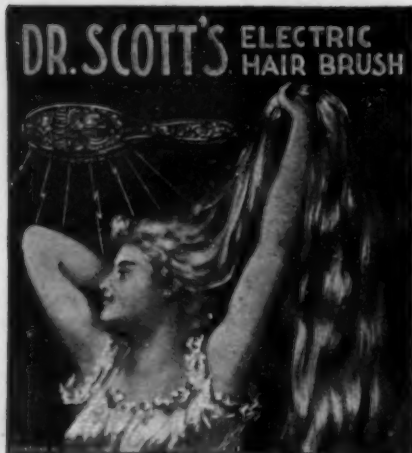
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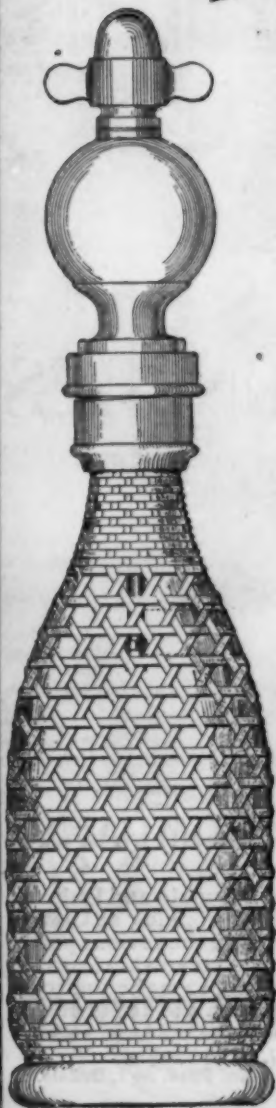
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IMPERIAL BANK OF GERMANY,	-	-	-	-	28,560,000
BANK OF RUSSIA,	-	-	-	-	25,714,920
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THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. I

MARCH, 1900

No. 1

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*This story was awarded the \$1,000 prize offered by THE SMART SET for a prose satire.

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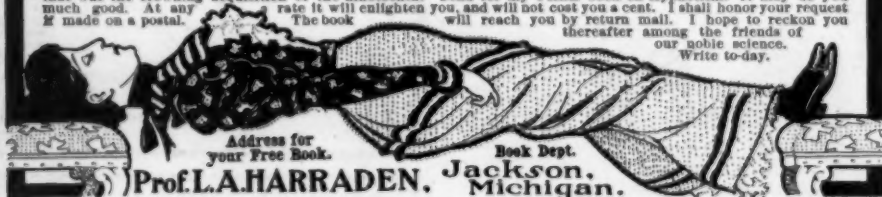
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A poet once wrote, "Man never is, but always to be, best." I think it safe to say there are few people in the world who would not be glad to better their present condition. They wish for a change and they wish it to be a beneficial one. They seek plenty instead of poverty, health instead of sickness, position instead of obscurity, love and esteem instead of cold neglect. How strange it is, withal, that people neglect the force of nature that can best accomplish such changes for them. THAT FORCE is HYPNOTISM. It works by strictly natural laws, and yet its results are almost in the nature of miracles. Like other forces we know of, it has existed since the creation, but only during the past century took rank as a science. It is a science of wonderful achievement and still more wonderful promise. Only the few, comparatively, have yet realized its potency in these problems of personal life. To the vast majority it is still a science of mystery or only known by its laughable or surprising stage effects. But it is coming to the front. I KNOW IT WELL both as a science and an art. It has been my life-work to study it and exhibit it and teach it to the American people. I have lived to see it emerge from clouds of timidity and prejudice into the light of a glorious welcome. I owe to Hypnotism all I am and have, and therefore I shall do my part to promote this jubilee of science. I have just published a dainty book called "Key to the Mysteries of Hypnotism," which I am GIVING AWAY FREE to all who write for a copy. It is a book that will instruct, delight and interest everybody. In a simple and popular style it explains the hypnotic trance and describes its chief phenomena. It shows in minutest detail the more remarkable changes of faculty and sensation, and the startling or funny situations it can offer on the stage. Thence it glides into the practical use of Hypnotism, the curing of pain and disease, the correction of evil habits, the promotion of business, the settlement of family difficulties, the winning of reluctant love, and many other problems of personal, social and business experience. My book, in fine, tells everything about this fascinating science that can interest the people or win for it their more consistent attention. MY FREE BOOK is also a handsome one. It is clearly and beautifully printed, and every page is adorned with artistic pictures to illustrate the text. I have gone to great expense in getting it up, and still greater in giving away free copies of it, but I shall consider myself well repaid if this people will acquire more correct views of my darling science. I want rivals, too. I want to see new hypnotists in the field. We must carry triumphantly into the twentieth century the knowledge that was the crowning acquisition of the nineteenth. Send for my FREE book on Hypnotism. It may do you much good. At any rate it will enlighten you, and will not cost you a cent. I shall honor your request if made on a postal. The book will reach you by return mail. I hope to reckon you thereafter among the friends of our noble science. Write to-day.



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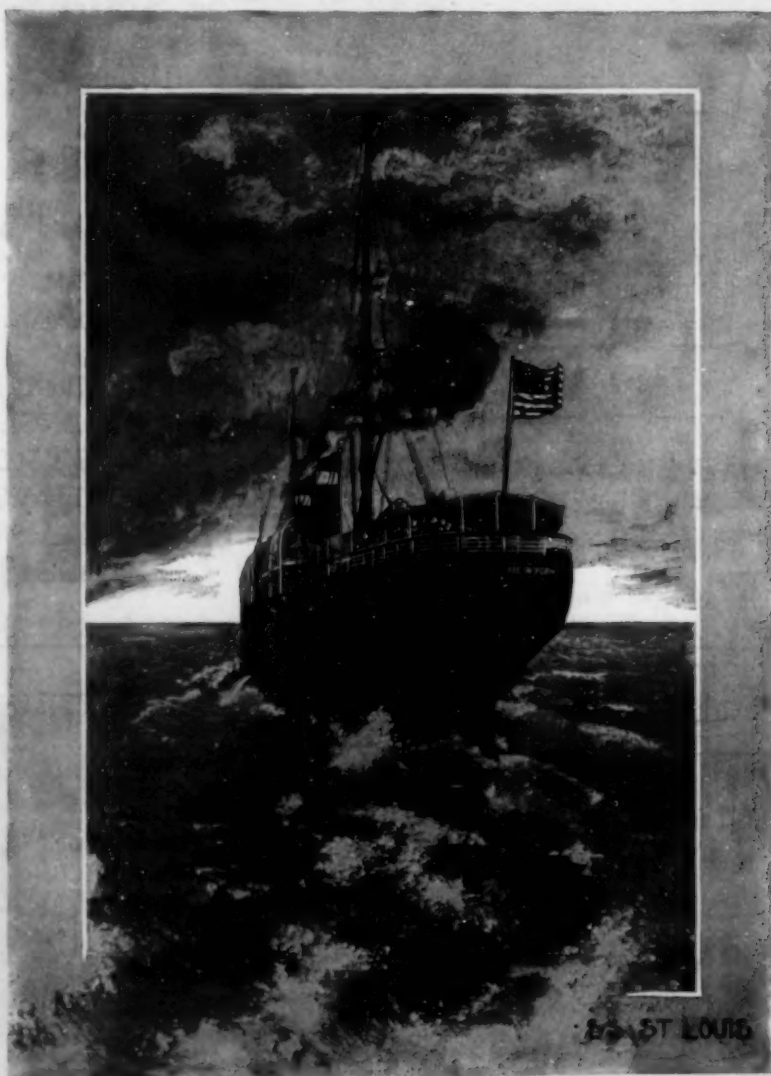
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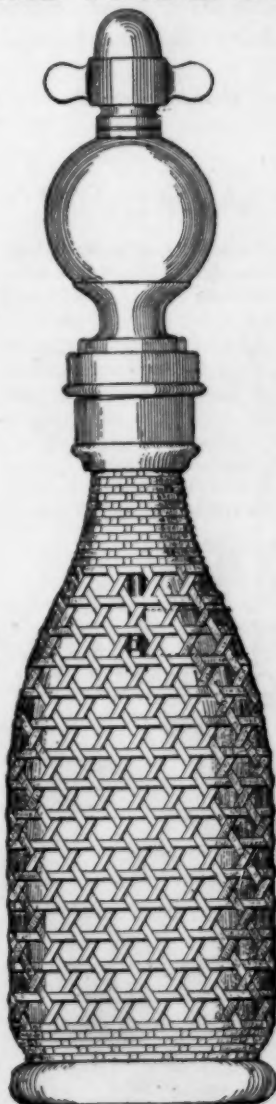
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A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. I

APRIL, 1900

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| A BUTTERFLY OF FASHION. Oliver Herford. | A GENTLEMAN OF VIRGINIA. John Regnault Ellyson. |
| THE PHANTOM DUKE. Edgar Saltus. | IF I HAD A MILLION. Charles Vale. |
| ONE OF CATTERMOLLE'S EXPERIMENTS. Julian Hawthorne. | A QUESTION OF CASTE. Gelett Burgess. |
| A MODERN MOTHER. Julien Gordon (Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger). | THE IMPRESSIONS OF A STAGE HORSE. Sarah Cooper Hewitt. |
| SOCIAL INCONSISTENCIES. Elliot Gregory. | AN UNACCOUNTABLE COUNTESS. Caroline K. Duer. |
| THE SON OF A NEW WOMAN. Miriam Michelson. | WHERE IT SEEMED ALWAYS AFTERNOON. Charles Frederic Nirdlinger. |
| TO AN IRIS. Bliss Carman. | |

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| A MAIDEN DIPLOMAT. L. H. Bickford. | THE ALOOFNESS OF LUCY. Caroline K. Duer. |
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| AN EASTER SOLILOQUY. Albert Bigelow Paine. | THE MAN IN THE WATCH. Charles Stokes Wayne. |
| A MODERN DAUGHTER. Julien Gordon. | THE WAY OF A MAID WITH A MAN. Richard Marsh. |
| THE GATES OF CIRCUMSTANCE. M. C. Aymar. | |
| THE REVOLUTION OF ENGLISH SOCIETY. Countess of Warwick. | |

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THE SECOND NUMBER (APRIL) WAS EVEN BETTER THAN THE FIRST.

New York Press says: "The April issue of THE SMART SET shows a distinct improvement over the first number. The strongest plea that this magazine makes in its own behalf is originality; and even were this its only claim, it might ride on it to popularity, for in this day of the stereotyped, nothing appeals so strongly to the great reading public as originality. Certainly THE SMART SET is original."

Boston Herald says: "It is thoroughly bright and wide awake. It is full of clever witticisms, and promises to be one of the few genuinely amusing and readable among the lighter periodicals."

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Aside from this competition, the editor of "The Smart Set" will promptly consider now, and at any time, and, if accepted, liberally pay for MSS. of clever stories, long or short, poems, sketches, witticisms and all entertaining matter.

THE SMART SET. 1135 Broadway. New York.

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. I

MAY, 1900

No. 3

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*This poem was awarded the \$500 prize offered by THE SMART SET for a satire in verse.

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Golf has always been one of the principal features at Hot Springs, and in the earlier days of its popularity in America it received its first impetus there owing to the number of enthusiasts of the game who were in the habit of spending the Fall and Spring there, and because of the excellent links on the grounds of the club, which are said to be among the best in this country. Tournaments are frequently held there.

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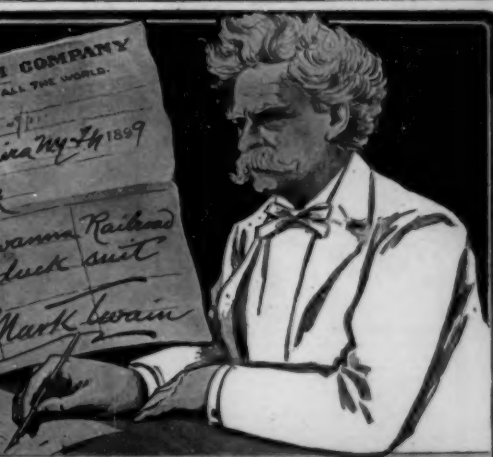
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A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. I

JUNE, 1900

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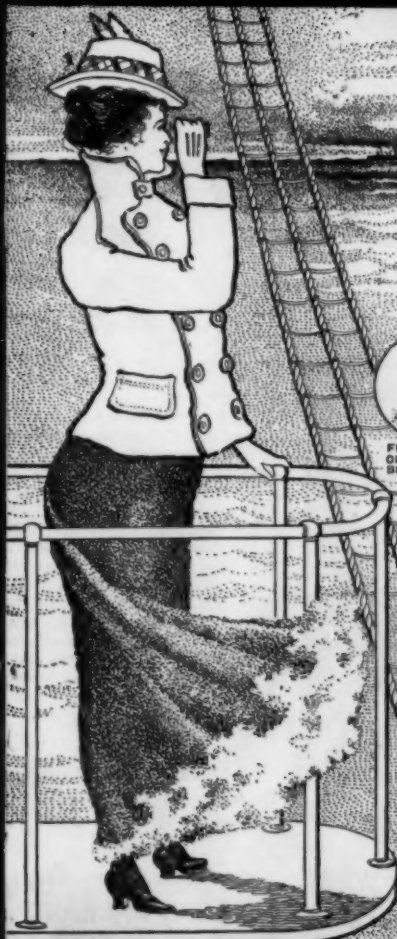
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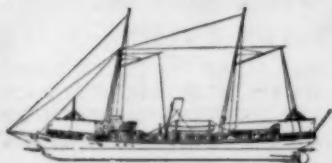
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